Christmas Number

Dance and Dancers

DECEMBER 1958

This month's full ballet guide

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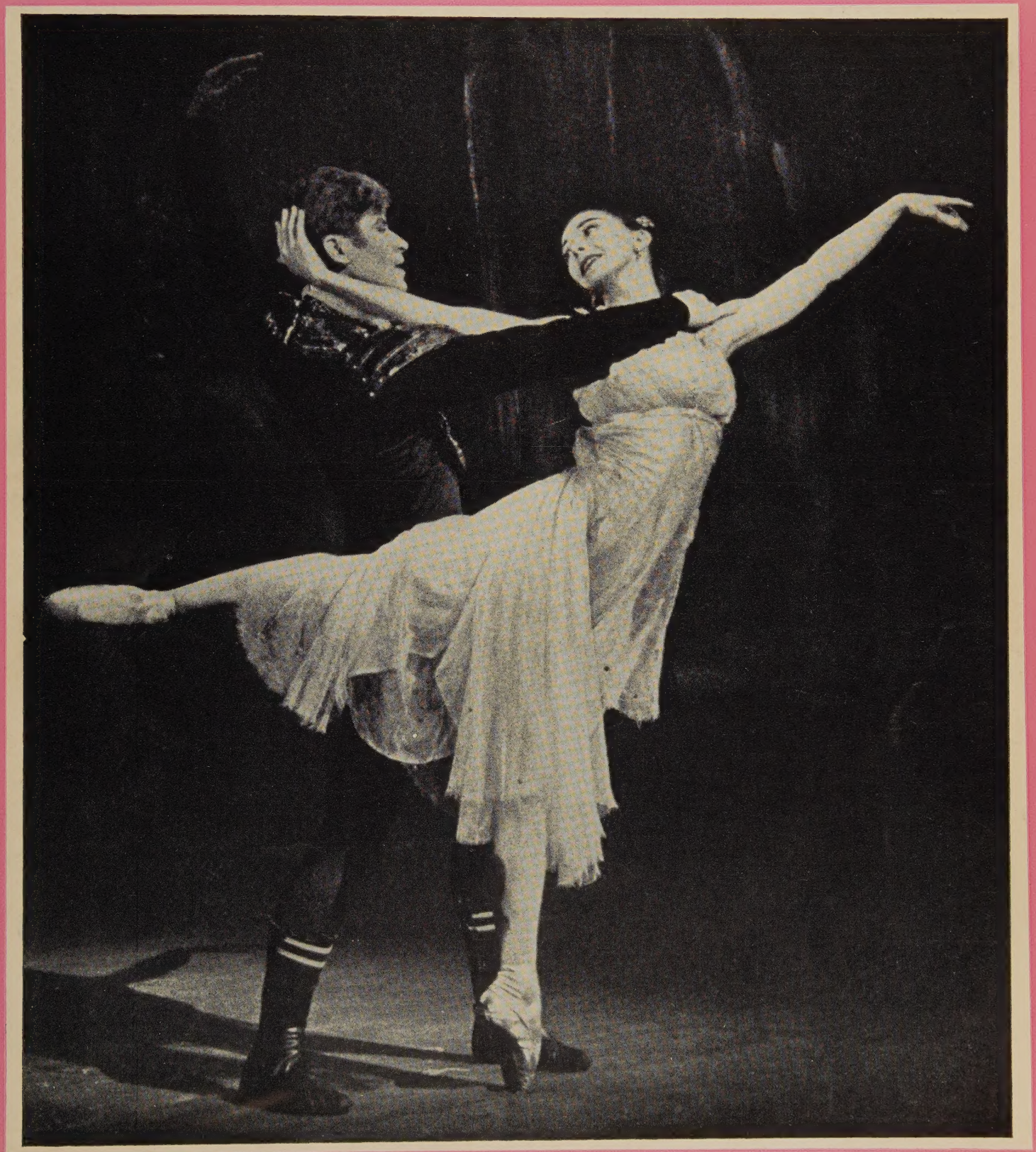

MARGOT FONTEYN and MICHAEL SOMES

of the Royal Ballet in Frederick Ashton's new three-act ballet, *Ondine*

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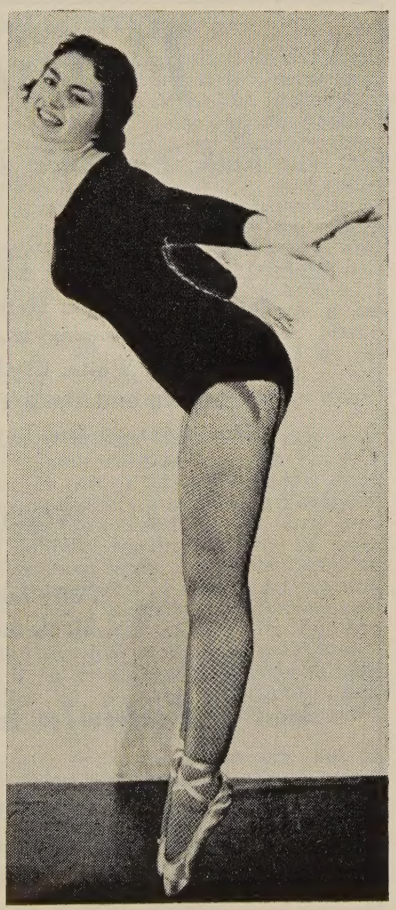

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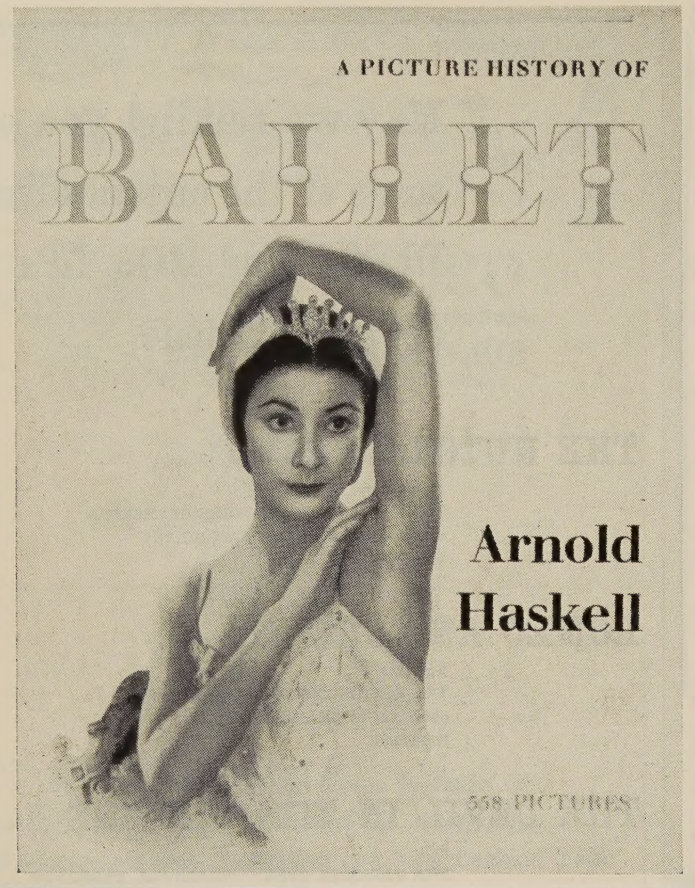

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Personalities of the Month

ASHTON/FONTEYN

THIS month we have taken for our personality not a dancer but an institution — the unique and wonderful partnership between Frederick Ashton and Margot Fonteyn. The partnership started as long ago as 1935, when the very young ballerina created her first rôle for the still somewhat inexperienced choreographer. The ballet was *Le Baiser de la Fée*. *Ondine* marks their 21st collaboration, and the partnership may now be said to have come of age. One of the most telling moments in the new ballet comes when Ondine appears to dive and flash exultantly in the water, manipulated by unseen hands. In a way this is symbolic of the ballerina's career, and the sure hands which have nurtured her talent and guided her development have been those of Ashton.

Yet Ashton has received back from Fonteyn as much as he has given. She has been his inspiration and his lodestar. Much of the distinctive quality of his choreography appears to be derived from the subtle interplay between their talents. It seems certain that alone neither would have reached the eminence which together they share.

With dance notation perhaps at last an actuality, it may well be that some of the ballets of Ashton will live long after Fonteyn is, at worst, just a memory or, at best, a flickering shadow on a cinema screen. But however many dancers pass through Fonteyn's rôles — some no doubt with their own especial magic, their own particular genius — it seems doubtful whether any one of them will ever succeed in illuminating these to the same extent as does Fonteyn. To us old fogies of ballet's next half-century there will only be one Chloë, one Sylvia, one Cinderella, one Ondine, one golden birthday ballerina, and one spartan goddess threading her way through the intricacies and simplicities of *Symphonic Variations*. And for Ashton, even if his creative span extends as long as Petipa's, one doubts whether he will ever find another such exquisite instrument with which to trace his choreographic felicities.

But this time we have come to praise the partnership, not to bury it, and we do not yet have to be valedictory. There seems no reason why Fonteyn should retire in the near future, and the likelihood is that Ashton will have many more opportunities of working with her, and so adding to an institution which has become a corner-stone of the new British ballet tradition.

This month's front cover, of Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes in Ondine, **is by Houston Rogers.**

December 1958 9th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 9 No. 12

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. MASON
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

GOODWILL SHONE AROUND?

HERE it is again, this season of goodwill, and looking back at some of the rumblings in the ballet world over the past twelve months, I would say that a bit of goodwill is just what ballet is badly needing. It has been a year of discontented stirring amongst dancers, apathy amongst audiences and quite a lot of ignorance displayed in the national press, who seem to be going out of their way to accelerate the destruction of what they consider to be an egg-headed art.

Of course dancers will always stir and their art is built up on restlessness, but unlike the boom years of a decade back there are not many places for them to stir to. In Britain, whether you like it or not, ballet has crystallised into three companies — The Royal Ballet (two companies combined and very national), Ballet Rambert (small but very large in artistic achievement), and London's Festival Ballet (very popular). Otherwise there are opera ballet companies, musicals and television. The field is not large enough to absorb all the people with a roving nature. In America the prospects are a little brighter, in France they are very dim.

The audience apathy in Britain is no new disease. They go for the stars but are suspicious of new ballets, new companies and all foreigners apart from those with a vast international reputation. They are slow to accept something but when they do, they cling. It is probably better this way, but unfortunately a lot of people cannot afford to wait while the British make up their minds.

The question of the national press is a more serious one and stems from the fact that many of the people writing about ballet suffer from the frivolous policy of their papers and know little of ballet as a composite art. In the days of ballet's post-war boom, the press was eager to devote space to ballet because then it was news; today it is more concerned with the love-life of "pop" singers and the bust measurements of foreign film stars. It is only when ballet happens to put one tiny foot out of place that it is in the running for banner headlines, and ballet's successes, which are considerable, interest the press not at all. Serious ballet criticism has become distorted by gimmicks and the burning question of a dancer's age until, as honest assessment, it becomes valueless.

So what are you going to do about this in the season of goodwill? As usual — nothing! But if the situation worries you then I would say to dancers — think very carefully about your lot before you move on; to the public, when you tire of *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*, just remember that there are still other ballet occasions of equal fascination; to the press — but what is the use, *you* wouldn't listen anyway. So the Editor and staff send you greetings for a happy Christmas and the hope of better things from you all in 1959.

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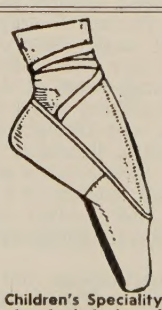

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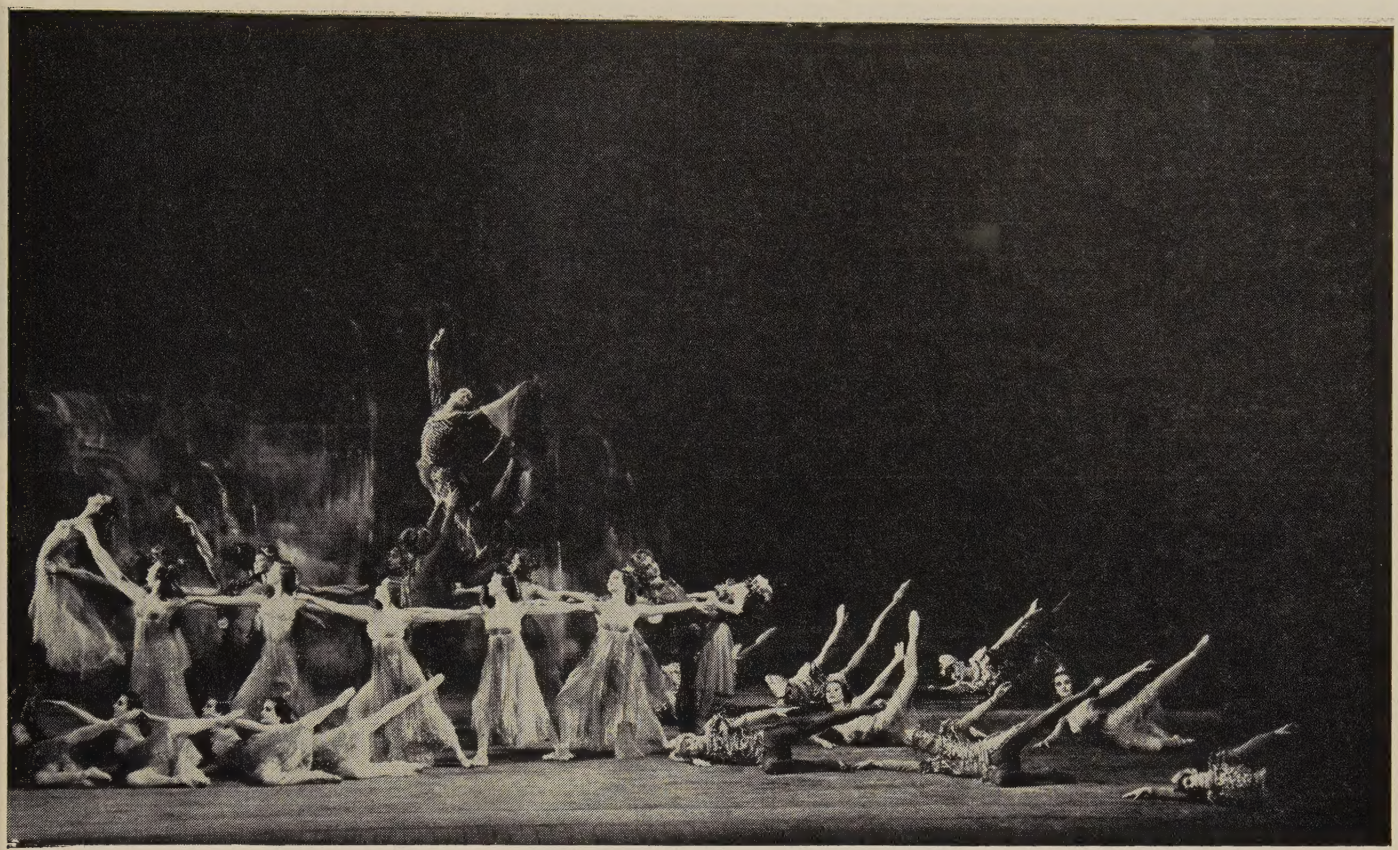

THE LORD HOLDS SWAY: Alexander Grant, aloft as Tirrenio, Lord of the Mediterranean, surrounded by Ondines. Margot Fonteyn, as Ondine, is on the extreme left. This is a group from Act 1, scene 2, of Ashton's new three-act ballet. Photo: Roger Wood.

ONDINE

(Part One)

First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on October 27, 1958. Scenario freely adapted by Frederick Ashton from the story by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué. Choreography by Frederick Ashton. Music by Hans Werner Henze. Scenery and costumes by Lila de Nobili. Lighting by Michael Northen.

Cast

Ondine ..... MARGOT FONTEYN
Palemon ..... MICHAEL SOMES
Berta ..... JULIA FARRON
Tirrenio, lord of the Mediterranean Sea ..... ALEXANDER GRANT
A Hermit ..... LESLIE EDWARDS
Grand Pas Classique (in Act 3) ..... ROSEMARY LINDSAY, ANNETTE PAGE, RONALD HYND, DESMOND DOYLE and *Corps de Ballet*
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STORY

ACT I

Scene 1 — Outside Berta's Castle

Berta, returning from a hunt, is being courted by Palemon, who offers her an amulet, which she scorns. She rejoins her friends, Palemon is left alone in meditation. A strange being, Ondine, appears mysteriously and Palemon is immediately captivated. She is alarmed and disappears into the forest, where Palemon, already in the clutches of his destiny, follows her. Berta, seeing Palemon disappear with Ondine, cries alarm and orders their pursuit.

Scene II — A Mysterious Forest

Tirrenio and the sprites lie in wait for the lovers. He endeavours to separate them and warns that should Palemon be unfaithful he must forfeit his life. Ondine, defying Tirrenio, together with Palemon seeks out a hermit who marries them. She gains her soul. The act ends with Berta distraught at the acts of Tirrenio, who tries to impede her pursuit of the lovers.

ACT II

A Port

Palemon and Ondine, after their marriage, come to a port where, seeing a ship, they decide to embark. Berta, following, sees the lovers, and bribes the captain to take her unseen on board. She, not knowing of their marriage, is moved by jealousy when Palemon, in a transport of love, offers the amulet to Ondine. She reproaches Palemon and reminds him that he had previously offered it to her. Ondine immediately gives the jewel to Berta. The enraged Tirrenio rises from the sea and snatches the amulet from Berta. Ondine runs to the side of the boat and dipping her hands into the water produces an exquisite magical necklace which she presents to Berta, who, horrified by the supernatural gift, throws it at Ondine's feet. The sailors regard Ondine with awe and doubt and threaten her. Tirrenio, rising from the sea to protect Ondine, beckons to her. He creates a storm and, rising on the crest of a wave, seizes her and drags her to the bottom of the sea. The storm increases.

ACT III

Palemon's Castle

Palemon and Berta, who have been saved from the shipwreck, arrive from their wedding ceremony. Berta shows her present to him, a magnificent portrait, and then leaves to prepare for the guests. Palemon, in a reverie, has a vision of Ondine under the water. Berta returns and disturbs his dream. The guests arrive and the festivities begin; at their height strange and sinister happenings occur.

Tirrenio appears seeking vengeance, the festivities are disrupted, Berta is dragged out by the Ondines and Ondine reluctantly appears.

Palemon now realises that Ondine is his only love. She warns him that, owing to his lack of faith, her kiss can only mean his death. Finally, sadly, she kisses him and he falls dead. She takes his body back to

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PRODUCTION AND CHOREOGRAPHY

ASHTON had apparently been contemplating a ballet based on Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's legend of Undine for about eight years. Since the story's first publication in 1811 it has proved a fruitful source for many plays, operas and ballets. The most important of the ballets were Paul Taglioni's *Undine, die Wassernymphe* (1836), Jules Perrot and Fanny Cerrito's *Ondine ou la Naiade* (1843), and Taglioni's re-working of his earlier ballet, *Coralia, or the Inconstant Knight* (1847). Whereas these choreographers obviously saw Undine as a topical theme in keeping with the cultural climate of their age, Ashton was presumably attracted to it partly for its poetically symbolic representation of ill-destined love, and partly for the opportunities it offered as a peg for his choreography and as a vehicle for Fonteyn.

Just as his earlier full-length ballets *Cinderella* and *Sylvia* bore a certain structural resemblance to Petipa ballets, so in *Ondine* he has returned to the form of the Romantic ballets of Perrot and Bournonville. The structure of *Ondine* bears a marked similarity with, say, Bournonville's *Napoli,* particularly with its second act given over almost entirely to *pas d'action* and stage effects, and its long concluding wedge of self-contained *divertissement* — very different from the varied dances found in Petipa — which has been included in the final act.

The question which the new work's structure and scenario immediately suggest is whether Ashton is trying to put the choreographic clock back? If you are going to have a modern full-length ballet, why put fairies at the bottom of the garden? What purpose can there be in a choreographer evoking a Romantic myth, the true force and immediacy of which must be lost on a present-day audience? For today, not only do we not believe in fairies, we do not even believe that our poets believe in them, for they are no longer current coinage for aesthetic transactions.

Yet Ashton has made no attempt to reconstruct a Romantic ballet. Rather he has taken the Romantic outline and used this as the basis for an entirely modern work. This is clearly a legitimate artistic process, far removed from *pastiche,* yet at the same time it is not going to make for good drama in the generally accepted sense of the term. A modern audience is most unlikely to experience any of that sense of involvement with this water-nymph and her prince that made Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* so moving. *Ondine* must be regarded as a work of poetic form, not dramatic content.

Ashton is no more Lavrovsky than Stravinsky is Prokofiev, and while one may or may not have a preference for either, to object that they both work along different lines savours more of prejudice than criticism.

Throughout his career Ashton has never been greatly concerned with drama, and has resolutely refused to accept choreography as a primarily narrative means of expression. In a symposium on "The Subject Matter of Ballet" in the current issue of *The Ballet Annual,* Ashton after admitting the usefulness of "librettos of a kind that supplemented choreographic expression", continues: "Poetic evocation when sensitively handled can lead to masterpieces such as *Les Sylphides, Serenade,* etc., and leave an audience suspended in a trance-like response (that a story ballet can never achieve) because of their very directness and delicacy of poetic potency that needle-like reaches the heart."

ONDINE BECOMES A MORTAL: Margot Fonteyn, as Ondine, with Michael Somes as Palemon, in the pas de deux *on the boat in Act 2. After being married by the hermit, Ondine gains her soul and is able to live with human beings. Photo: Roger Wood.*

In *Ondine,* or so it seems to me, Ashton is searching for this "poetic evocation" and, in a sense, is adapting the emotional stylisation of a plotless ballet into a narrative framework. This choreography is far from cold, anything but unemotional, yet at the same time can perhaps be as much enjoyed as spectacle and pure dance as dance drama.

Yet while Ashton's theme is not compellingly theatrical, it has the merit of being simple, and is easy to follow. He has perhaps not taken much more from Fouqué's original story than did Perrot, and certainly not nearly so much as Taglioni, but he has retained its tragic end, made no elaborations of his own, and admirably succeeded in giving the whole story the simple directness of a myth. This is an Ondine in essence, with all the old-fashioned Romantic paraphernalia pared away.

The treatment Ashton uses for the narrative will be familiar to anyone at all acquainted with his work. Whereas most choreographers of dramatic ballets attempt to characterise, if only in cameo sketches, all the characters in the ballet, Ashton's method is to paint in one or two figures, and to leave the rest sketchy and stylised. Occasionally he lightly limns in all the principal characters, as in *Les Masques* and *Daphnis and Chloë,* but in other ballets, *Nocturne* or *Rinaldo and Armida* for example, he gives life to only one or two of the characters, leaving the rest in outline. It is this latter method he employs in *Ondine.* Ondine, herself, is depicted with the greatest skill and care, and the choreographer has also taken a certain amount of trouble over Tirrenio. The other three characters, including the luckless hero, are left much less clearly defined in the choreography, and the dancers are relied upon to do their best with the minimum of dramatic material. All the rest of the cast is left as a shadowy, non-individualised background. The effect is to place Ondine in an unwavering dramatic spotlight.

Ashton puts both theme and characters securely within the Romantic tradition, and is very successful in conjuring up the right atmosphere for the work. There is one minor discrepancy between his original scenario, as printed at the front of the German edition of the score, and the ballet as produced, and his second thoughts, faithless to the proverb, have not proved best. Originally it was intended to introduce Tirrenio and his entourage of Ondines at the beginning of the last act. Disguised mysteriously, they were to have provided the final *divertissements* before revealing themselves in the *dénouement.* This device, not unlike that used by Bourmeister for Rothbart's party in the Stanislavsky *Swan Lake,* could have added quite a lot to the ballet's effectiveness.

When one moves from general observations and gets down to particulars it is clear that much of the work's spectacular appeal has been entrusted to the production as distinct from the choreography. Ashton was obviously attempting, in part, the grand style of ballet production that has as one of its constituents fantastically brilliant scenic ingenuity. In this aim, the fulfilment of which must be discussed at least as much

ONDINES IN A WATERFALL: Fonteyn, aloft, surrounded by Ondines in a waterfall group. This is one of the many beautiful groups from Act I, scene 2, of the ballet. Grant, as Tirrenio, is seen on the right. Photo: Roger Wood.

under the heading of "Décor" as "Production", he and his collaborators have, I think, been only moderately successful. In the second act, particularly, there are a number of production points, as distinct from questions of scenery and lighting, where a little more thought could have added greatly to the effect of realism at which Ashton aimed.

After a very clever device simulating the ship leaving port, it was a pity to let it go out with its sails down as if it were being pushed by a secret outboard motor. The rolling of the ship is partly conveyed by the swaying crew, but the effectiveness of this is seriously reduced by them not only appearing to move fore-and-aft rather than port-and-starboard, but also by a failure to synchronise these movements with the heaving horizon. Other scenic shortcomings cannot be placed at Ashton's door, although it seems pointless for the sailors to indulge in so many movements the nautical purpose of which is never made apparent.

One triumph of the production comes in the last act when the vision of Ondine is seen literally dancing on the waves. Supported by unseen — or nearly unseen — hands, Ondine appears to flash and cavort through the waves, like a half-nymph, half-goddess. This is a beautiful piece of stagecraft, made supreme by Ashton's poetic choreography.

Although *Ondine* is Ashton's fourth full-length ballet, it is the first in which he has been entirely responsible for the libretto or used an original score. Previously he has been circumscribed by the demands of existing music, and to a lesser extent an existing scenario. Here it was quite untrammelled. In an interview given to the *Sunday Times*, he has said that he gave Henze "a strict minutage, like Petipa used to give Tchaikovsky, detailing the length of each dance and section".

What has evolved from this collaboration is a choreographic structure quite different from that found in *Cinderella* and *Sylvia*, that had been foreshadowed by his version of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Royal Danish Ballet. Discarding the old structural conventions of 19th-century ballet, with their formal variations, *pas de deux* and *ensembles*, Ashton has dictated a free form in which all the dances are integrated into a continuous statement, the choreography is permitted to arise naturally from the theme, and no concessions have been made to the traditional fabric of the old full-length classics.

This, of course, is nothing very revolutionary, but merely the extension of normal modern practice over three acts instead of one. However, this is the first time Ashton has had the opportunity of working in this way in England, and it is this logical rather than formal structure that gives *Ondine* its kinship with the Bolshoi ballets. Post-Fokine Soviet choreographers, having the advantage of new full-length scores denied to Ashton, have used a natural dramatic framework for years. And incidentally, for there is nothing new under the sun, it is a method of ballet-making not very dissimilar from that used by Bournonville more than 100 years ago.

Another link between Ashton's *Ondine* and Bournonville, apart from the spectacular show-piece of the second act, is to be found in the last act *divertissements*. Here Ashton has followed, perhaps unwittingly, the old choreographer, by conceiving his *divertissements* as large-scale essays in a coherent style in place of the series of contrasted dances typical of the Petipa era, and found in Ashton's *Sylvia*. But Ashton has taken these further than his Romantic predecessor and virtually inserted into his ballet two miniature yet perfectly well-defined plotless ballets, each of which could easily exist apart from its parent work.

More than in any of his earlier full-length ballets, in *Ondine* Ashton has contrived to maintain a remarkably consistent choreographic style. This, according to the choreographer in the previously mentioned interview, has "been inspired by the sea". Certainly, looking at the fluidity and flow of the solo work, and the surging wave-like dynamics here characteristic of the *corps de ballet*, the marine influence is easily enough detected.

The choreography is remarkable in that in part it represents the consummation of Ashton's earlier style, his neo-classical manner brought to an effortless perfection, and yet fused with this in a new, almost rhapsodic element, seen most clearly in the dances for Ondine, yet also making itself felt elsewhere in the ballet. The germinal works from which this new manner appears to have been derived are obviously *Homage to the Queen* — particularly, of course, the Water episode — and less obviously, and very surprisingly, *Dante Sonata*. Another work that has probably added something to this new development is Ashton's production, some years ago, of Gluck's *Orpheus*.

Yet what has emerged with its strikingly free, almost liquid, arm movements, and its bold, sweeping use of the body, is in effect a rich new choreographic strain in Ashton's work.

Just as in *Sylvia*, the new ballet opens with a male *pas de six*. This "Huntsman's Dance" is buoyant and vigorous, full of interest in unusually well-contrived and varied patterns and dynamics. Possibly owing something to the style of Cranko, it is rather better than the second excursion Ashton makes into "modernist" choreography later in the ballet, and from the start establishes the important rôle male dancing is to play in the work.

After this opening the pace simmers down. The *pas d'action* between Palemon and Berta is almost perfunctory, and the wistful solo for Palemon which follows achieves little more with its slow *pirouettes* and *arabesques* than does Aminta's somewhat similar *allegro* solo in *Sylvia*.

But all these are merely the preliminaries before the entrance of Ondine. Materialising from her ornamental grotto she enters her brave new world with delighted wonder. Finding her shadow she plays with it like a child with a strange new toy. This use of Perrot's famous *pas de l'ombre* is perhaps obvious, yet Ashton and his ballerina give it such an air of fresh delicacy that it becomes immeasurably touching. The meeting between the lovers is also exquisitely contrived; Palemon comes up behind Ondine and she sees her shadow joined by an intruder; at first she is as bewildered as

Crusoe, and only when she turns does she come face to face with the captivated Palemon. Their comparatively brief dance together — this meeting between the elements of Earth and Water — is a beautiful, fanciful thing completely expressive of their shifting emotions. Ashton ends this first love duet with a telling theatrical phrase: the water-nymph stretches out her hand and touches this intriguing new creature, suddenly she feels his heart-beat and instantly recoils; again she makes a tentative exploratory gesture, then frightened she runs off into the forest pursued by the now ardent Palemon.

With the second scene of the first act, the style Ashton has hinted at earlier comes boldly into its own. This is the promised "Ballet of the Waves". Here Ashton produces his most spectacular choreography and also his most evocative. The dances for the Lord of the Sea, Tirrenio, have much of the same coursing pulse that distinguished "Shaw's" variation in *Homage,* and the run and break of water is also suggested by the *corps de ballet* of Ondines. Yet the highlight of the act comes with the idyllically drawn-out *pas de deux* for the lovers.

Palemon comes to Ondine, who is cowering with fright. He reassures her and without haste or bother their love unfolds as it grows. Of all the many *pas de deux* Ashton has created for Fonteyn and Somes, this is perhaps the truest and purest. It shows Ondine gay and capricious, Palemon fervent and strong, and reveals the development of their love. In earlier works Ashton has never been afraid to use a simple homely gesture to drive home reality into the formalised classic *pas de deux,* and here he brings humanity to his conception by having Ondine, at the height of their passion, caress her lover's hair with a movement that conveys more truth than all the taffeta phrases of the entire dance vocabulary.

Throughout this scene Ashton makes great play with dance images drawn from water. Ondine is frequently given a plastic movement that irresistibly recalls a rippling mountain stream, while her undulating arms often give an impression as of threading through water, and many of the groupings suggest fountains, waterfalls and cascades.

It is a pity that after the lovers' marriage by the Hermit — himself a somewhat creakingly mechanical *deus ex machina* — the change that should have come over Ondine when she acquires her human soul is not given time to make itself felt. The *finale* of the act, when the intruding Berta and her hunting party are chased wili-like from the scene, is a workmanlike piece of stagecraft, well in keeping with the traditions of the Romantic ballet. Yet here, and elsewhere in the scene, Ashton shows a tendency to use too many dancers, overcrowding his stage picture.

Naturally the second act makes more demand on Ashton's skill as a producer than as a choreographer. Here his sketchy, impressionist approach to scene painting is probably seen to its worse advantage. A more naturalistic crowd on the quayside — that might have been produced by Lavrovsky — could here have provided a useful contrast, and once again his treatment and motivation of Berta is casually perfunctory. That these faults are probably the inescapable price to be paid for the ballet's virtues unfortunately does little to disguise them. The now human Ondine in this act is skilfully shown as a creature of dual allegiances. During the first performance I jotted down a note "Lady into Mermaid", and the correspondences between Ondine

ALL AT SEA — AND IN IT : Two pictures from Act 2. Fonteyn and Somes, centre, surrounded by the crew as the boat puts to sea. Below, Somes and Julia Farron, as Berta, escape from the shipwreck at the end of the Act.

Photos : Roger Wood.

COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE DIVERTISSEMENT : *The dancers who come to entertain the bridal couple and their guests at the wedding in the last act. Centre are Maryon Lane and Brian Shaw. On each side of them are Doreen Wells with Peter Clegg and Merle Park with Pirmin Trecu.* *Photo : Roger Wood.*

and Andrée Howard's Mermaid and also her vulpine Mrs. Tebrick are revealing. Most of the act is carried out in a simple form of recitative dance, breaking into muted solos for Ondine, fragmentary *pas de deux* for the lovers, and a dramatic *pas de trois* in which they are joined by Berta, that interestingly recalls the "classic Romantic situation" of La Sylphide, James and Effie, yet is carried out in a contemporary dance idiom somewhat resembling Tudor.

To a degree the last act comes as a disappointment. How much of a disappointment it will not be possible to judge until repeated viewings enable a final opinion to be formulated in place of these first impressions. Yet, despite the excellence of Ondine's vision "scene" and the culminating *pas de deux,* the act as it stands at present will probably be thought to lack the knock-out punch that was needed to clinch this as an unqualified choreographic masterpiece. The weakness here rests largely in the two miniature ballets Ashton has inserted for his *divertissement.* The music — of which a little more later — is here particularly arid and unhelpful, and this may prevent Ashton from titivating them up into respectability.

The first of the miniature ballets is called *Grand Pas Classique,* and is a classical plotless work scored for 22 dancers. The choreography is in the neo-classical manner, and at times recalls Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial,* rather more than Ashton's own personal idiom. Unhappily the music does not lend itself to a grandiloquent statement of the classic dance. Furthermore the ballet has to be crowded into the centre of the stage and the size of its cast does not permit the dance patterns to emerge as clearly as they might. This lack of space is perhaps particularly felt in an apparently well-conceived male *pas de huit,* in which Ashton is clearly attempting to repeat the success of his male *mazurka* in *Birthday Offering.*

The second *divertissement* — called simply that — is a *demi-caractère* ballet of *commedia dell'arte* figures. Using a mere 18 dancers as its cast, it is set to a modernist piano concerto, and here Ashton seems to have chosen to score his choreography in something of the manner of MacMillan. While the acerbity and wit of Ashton's invention is consistently brilliant — if this is a *pastiche,* it is one from which even MacMillan might learn quite a bit from its workmanship — it lacks the spontaneity and genuine inspiration of MacMillan on his home ground.

Both of these *divertissements* show a sure hand but a weak heart, and while it is possible that Ashton could make improvements to some of their detailing, I personally feel that the dreariness of the music will in any case prove insuperable to the creation of the sustained dance brilliance which the ballet calls for at this point.

With the return of Ondine, Ashton steps outside the alien corn and finds himself back on his native territory. The final *pas de deux* in which Palemon receives the kiss of death naturally shows a strong affinity with *Rinaldo and Armida,* but in his new work the choreographer is more direct and forceful.

The concluding apotheosis, with the arms of the *corps de ballet* echoing with their lattice-geometry the Ondine group which earlier celebrated the marriage, deserved a more effective staging than it got.

Although for scope and imagination Ashton has never produced anything to equal the achievement of *Ondine,* choreography neither dwells in an ivory tower nor lives in a vacuum.

Music is not my concern in these notes, yet it would be impossible to make even a preliminary assessment of the ballet's total worth without expressing some opinion on Henze's score. If, as I fear is all too likely, *Ondine* fails to establish itself in the permanent repertory, I think the lion's share of the blame will fall on the music.

I would happily be proved a blundering Hanslick, yet it seems to me that this eclectic music — in which Henze must come close to showing nearly 57 varieties of composition — while for the most part giving the ballet adequate atmospheric and metronomic support, never once flares up to illuminate the remarkably successful choreography.

Taken in conjunction with its music and designs — about which I also have a few,

far less weighty, reservations — the choreography by itself cannot secure for the ballet a complete success. Yet looked at by itself, it is for the most part masterly and makes the ballet a pearl — a flawed pearl, yet a pearl still of great price.

DANCING

IT seems likely than *Ondine* — whether it eventually survives or not — will be as inextricably linked with Fonteyn as *La Sylphide* with Taglioni, *Giselle* with Grisi or *Romeo and Juliet* with Ulanova. For this work gives us all of Fonteyn. It even shows us aspects of her art we never knew existed.

That Fonteyn was a great dancer we knew, and that her powers of interpretation as an actress were increasing we had joyfully noticed, yet never before has she had such an opportunity to create a convincing portrait on the scale she gives us in *Ondine*.

Ashton, who knows his ballerina like a violinist knows his Stradivarius, has long — in *Tiresias, Homage to the Queen* and *La Péri* — been interested in Fonteyn as a creature of the elements, a thing of pure spirit, of fairy magic.

In *Ondine* this elemental quality is time and again evoked. Yet because the water-nymph knows the sharpness of human love, has human aspirations, her rôle can also display that other precious quality of her art — her quintessential womanliness. The two can exist side by side; the genius of Chloë and the genius of the Queen of the Air can find their common utterance in this one characterisation.

Possibly it is in the continual juxtaposition of these two sides of Fonteyn that gives her performance in *Ondine* that special quality of complete and utter truth. In the first scene we see her playing with her shadow or Palemon's diamond amulet and recognise a non-human sprite. Then later we watch her before the marriage ceremony, while Palemon is speaking to the Hermit, and, seeing the shy smile play over her face, become aware we are looking at a young girl, trembling with humanity.

Fonteyn's is a performance so rich in nuance, so quick with feeling, that I can only compare it with Ulanova's Juliet, for I have seen nothing else quite like it in the theatre. Like Ulanova she does not dance, she does not act, she becomes. And I am not just playing with words in an attempt to indicate someone's remarkable absorption in a particular rôle, I am stating what I believe to be an unvarnished fact which requires eyes and not fancy to appreciate.

By the side of Fonteyn the rest of the cast, of necessity, look somewhat insignificant. For one thing it is that kind of a ballet. Michael Somes, partnering with discreet nobility and restrained passion, has an ungrateful part made principally of cardboard. In time he may be able to bring to Palemon the same distinction that marks his Sigfried, yet at the time of writing he has not yet succeeded in making a great deal of it.

Alexander Grant's Tirrenio proved far more interesting. Both his ecstatic dancing and acting possessed the grandeur befitting a great lord. Flicking his aqueous cloaks with fine disdain, he raged through the ballet with the magnificent air of controlling its destiny.

Like Somes, Julia Farron had been given little or no chance of presenting a coherent character, and was reduced to displaying the surface emotions required of her. Leslie Edwards — the Hermit — was in the ballet more to fulfil a function than to play a part, and this function he dispatched with due diligence.

The *divertissement* interlude ballets of the last act provided plenty of opportunities for dancing which were more seized upon than taken. The *Grand Pas Classique* was very ably led by Rosemary Lindsay, Annette Page, Desmond Doyle and Ronald Hynd, yet its performance as a whole could have done with a more clear-cut execution, and this seemed particularly true of the definitely untidy male *pas de huit*.

Principal honours in the *commedia dell' arte* interlude went to Maryon Lane, who danced with typical piquancy, and Brian Shaw, who made the best of possible showings in a variation which gave no fair return in effect for what its musical and physical difficulties demanded in effort. To a lesser extent the same was true of the other soloists in this interlude — Merle Park (later Shirley Grahame), Doreen Wells, Peter Clegg and Pirmin Trecu.

But on the whole the dancing was of an evenly high standard, and — with the sole exception of the *Grand Pas Classique* — it is difficult to see where much improvement could be made. Finally — perhaps on the principal of the first being last — a word of praise for the Huntsmen who open the ballet, Peter Clegg, Ray Powell, Stanley Holden, Douglas Steuart, John Sale and William Wilson.

Clive Barnes

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Running Time

Act I — 45 minutes. Act II — 20 minutes. Act III — 40 minutes.

Audience Reaction

25 calls on 1st night, including 8 with house lights up: fairly general cheering, upper parts of the house more enthusiastic than lower. 2nd performance — 15 calls. 3rd performance — 15 calls.

Press Reaction

(6 stars — rave; 5 stars — enthusiastic; 4 stars — favourable; 3 stars — lukewarm; 2 stars — unfavourable; 1 star — pan.)

Daily Express ****; *Daily Mail* **; *Daily Telegraph* ***; *Evening News* ****; *Evening Standard* ******; *Financial Times* **; *Manchester Guardian* *****; *News Chronicle* ****; *Observer* ****; *Star* ****; *Sunday Times* *****; *The Times* ****.

NEXT MONTH: Nöel Goodwin will review the music of Ondine, **and Peter Williams will review the designing. There will also be many more pictures of this important production.**

THE DEATH OF PALEMON: Palemon in the end realises that it is only Ondine he really loves and when she returns during the wedding festivities, he kisses her only to die. Here he is seen in the eternal embrace of Ondine as the curtain falls.

Photo: Roger Wood.

New Ballets in New York

Reviewed by ARTHUR TODD

ONE FROM BALLETS: U.S.A.

3 x 3
(a Curtain-raiser)

First given at the Alvin Theatre, by Ballets: U.S.A., on September 4, 1958. Choreography by Jerome Robbins. Music by Georges Auric (Wind Trio). Décor and Lighting by Jean Rosenthal. Costumes by Irene Sharaff.

Danced by
JOAN VAN ORDEN ERIN MARTIN
BERYL TOWBIN TOM ABBOTT
GENE GAVIN JAMES MOORE

Played by
William Criss (Oboe)
Loren Glickman (Bassoon)
Emery Davis (Clarinet)

THIS work was given its world première on the opening night of the company's first New York season. The programme frankly states that it is a "curtain-raiser", and this is exactly what it is. Although it is most certainly not a major Robbins work it has been composed with wit and invention and admirably serves as a charming, if slight, introduction to a well-balanced programme (the remainder of which was reviewed some months ago by Noël Goodwin when the ballets were created for the festival at Spoleto in Italy).

Auric's score, which admirably matches the wit and invention of Robbins' choreography is divided into three movements — Decidé, Romance and Finale — and is played by the three top-hatted musicians each sitting at the top of step-ladders. The three male dancers and the three girls used graduated orange stools for props.

ONE FROM NEW YORK CITY BALLET

Waltz-Scherzo

First given at New York City Center, by New York City Ballet, on September 9, 1958. Choreography by George Balanchine. Music by Tchaikovsky. Costumes by Karinska. Lighting by Nanne Porcher.

PATRICIA WILDE ANDRE EGLEVSKY

MOST reminiscent, perhaps, of Balanchine's earlier *Valse Fantaisie,* this new *pas de deux* is lyrical, lovely to look at and completely classical, though, on the surface it appears to be informal. Balanchine has given Patricia Wilde and André Eglevsky a series of virtuosic passages that had the first night audience cheering before its conclusion. Wilde, who always appears to be above all technical problems, danced both the flowing patterns and the tremendously demanding sections with equal grace and enchantment. Eglevsky also was especially noteworthy for his *batterie* and *ballon.* Karinska's ravishing white chiffon costume for Wilde added considerably to the style of this very agreeable work.

WALTZ-SCHERZO: André Eglevsky and Patricia Wilde in the pas de deux, *to Tchaikovsky music, created for them by Balanchine.*

SIX FROM AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

Concerto

First given at the Metropolitan Opera House, by American Ballet Theatre, on September 16, 1958. Choreography by Herbert Ross. Music by Tchaikovsky (Violin Concerto in D). Designed by Roger Bezombes.

First Movement
LUPE SERRANO SCOTT DOUGLAS
ROYES FERNANDEZ
MICHAEL MAULE
Susan Borree, Sharon Enoch, Jillana Williams, Sallie Wilson, Ivan Allen, Richard Beaty, Charles Bennett, Larry Boyette, Bill Carter, Darrell Notara, Paul Sutherland, George Tomal.

Second Movement
RUTH ANN KOESUN JOHN KRIZA
Lois Bewley, Carolyn Clark, Fredda Maurice, Andrina Miller, Barbara Remington, Nadine Revene, Patti Schmidt, Sandra Sommers.

Third Movement
NORA KAYE ERIK BRUHN
Ray Barra, Leo Duggan, Enrique Martinez, Elisabeth Carroll, Nana Prudente, Eloise Ramsey.

GIVEN the talents of the extremely talented and inventive choreographer, Herbert Ross, the dance talents of Nora Kaye, Erik Bruhn, Lupe Serrano and Scott Douglas, and John Kriza and Ruth Ann Koesun, plus the talents of Roger Bezombes, French costume and décor designer, one might have expected all of this to add up to a ballet of major note. Unfortunately, for all concerned, it just doesn't, and perhaps Tchaikovsky's "Violin Concerto in D" is to blame, because it proves to be a most ungratifying score for dance. Some sections prove undanceable, while others lend themselves only to a "music visualisation" type of movement.

Quite obviously from this work it appears that Herbert Ross has been influenced by the Moiseyev Ballet and the Bolshoi Ballet films that have been so enormously popular in America, for he has attempted to recreate the rich folk qualities, the technical brilliance and the flashing vitality that are the distinguishing characteristics of past and present Russian dance. However, this is not his background nor, indeed, is it that of the formidable array of dancers put at his disposal, and the results are pretty embarrassing. Neither was there much material help provided by costume and scenic designer Roger Bezombes. His Leger-like drop curtain is enormously effective, yet is completely out of character with the music and dance action that follows. At one time in his career, Bezombes must have seen a great many of Isamu Noguchi's settings for Martha Graham. At any event, he has devised a mobile structure with what looked to me like illuminated Easter eggs that move about in the upper stage space (and which a good share of the first night audience applauded madly), while costumes looked like a Hollywood idea of peasant Russia made chic, chiefly in purple and violet neon colours. Moreover, some of these costumes were designed and cut so badly that they

CONCERTO : *Two movements from Herbert Ross's ballet for American Ballet Theatre. Left, the second movement with Kriza and Ruth Ann Koesun. Right, the third movement with Nora Kaye and Erik Bruhn.*

seemed to be in the way of the dancers.

Lupe Serrano and Scott Douglas danced away with any honours of the evening in the first section of the ballet. The other stars, however, seemed miscast and had little or nothing provided to fit their specific styles.

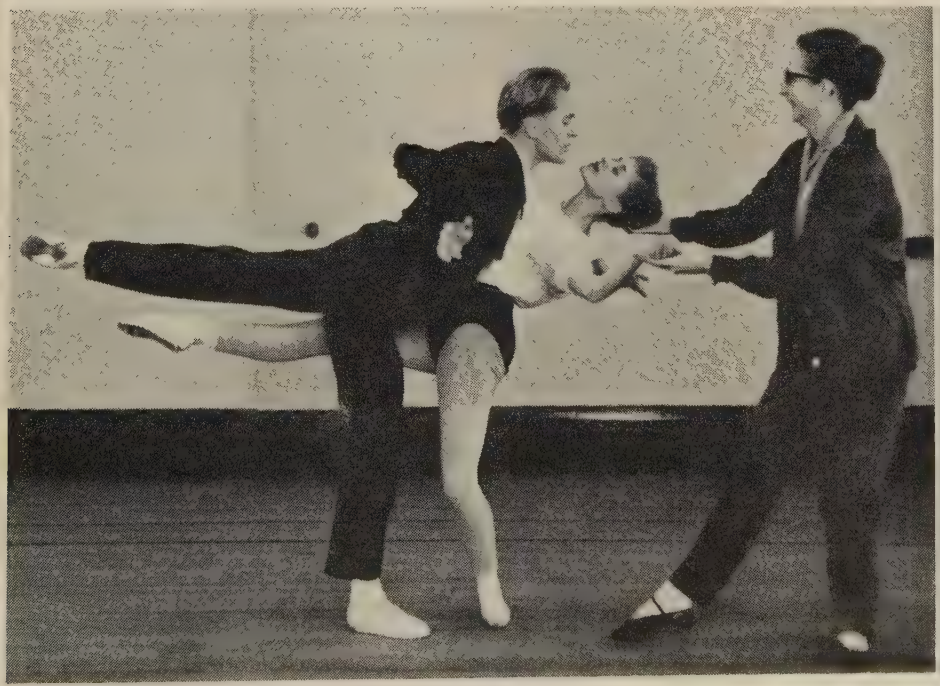
Miss Julie

First given in America by American Ballet Theatre, at the Metropolitan Opera House, on September 18, 1958. Choreography by Birgit Cullberg. Music by Ture Rangstrom, arranged by Hans Grossmann. Designed by Sven Erixon.

Miss Julie ..... VIOLETTE VERDY
Julie's Father ..... DARRELL NOTARA
Julie's Fiancé ..... SCOTT DOUGLAS
Jean, the Butler ..... ERIK BRUHN
Kristine, the Cook ..... SALLIE WILSON
Clara, a peasant ..... SUSAN BORREE
Anders, a peasant ..... RAY BARRA
Corps de ballet of peasants, Gossips and Ancestors

SWEDEN'S most famous contemporary ballet, originally also seen in London in 1950, emerged as one of the great artistic and box office hits of the current season. The Strindberg drama, of course, is already familiar to everyone, and in her choreography Birgit Cullberg has captured the mood and dramatic overtones superbly. Certainly this production had an ideal cast for its American presentation with Violette Verdy giving one of the great performances of the season as the tragic heroine and with Erik Bruhn's equally superb characterisation that alternated between servility and arrogance and was all the more exciting because this rôle is completely opposite to this *danseur noble's* usual casting. Scott Douglas as the fiancé, Sallie Wilson as the cook and Ray Barra as a drunken peasant were likewise notable. Both score and settings seemed to capture the essential mood of the piece and even the drop cur-

MISS JULIE : *Left, choreographer Birgit Cullberg rehearsing Erik Bruhn and Violette Verdy. Right, Verdy, in the title rôle, as she appeared on the stage.*



PAEAN : *A group from Herbert Ross's ballet, first given at a Ballet Theatre Workshop performance and later taken into the repertory for the company's recent European tour.*

tain provided an ominous prediction of the events to follow. In subsequent performances John Kriza's enactment of the butler's rôle seemed thin and inconclusive. Make no mistake about it, however, this work has added considerably to the lustre of the season and is a most valuable addition to the repertory.

Paean

First public performance in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House, by American Ballet Theatre, on September 19, 1958. Ballet, after verses by Sappho, by Herbert Ross. Music by Chausson (Concerto for Violin, Piano and Strings).

INVOCATION

"Goddess of Cyprus come . . ."
VIOLETTE VERDY
ROYES FERNANDEZ
Susan Borree, Sharon Enoch, Sallie Wilson, Ray Barra, Leo Duggan, Enrique Martinez.

DEDICATION

". . . poised like a golden flower in air . . . Clais Beloved . . . Clais Mine"
RUTH ANN KOESUN JOHN KRIZA

VISITATION

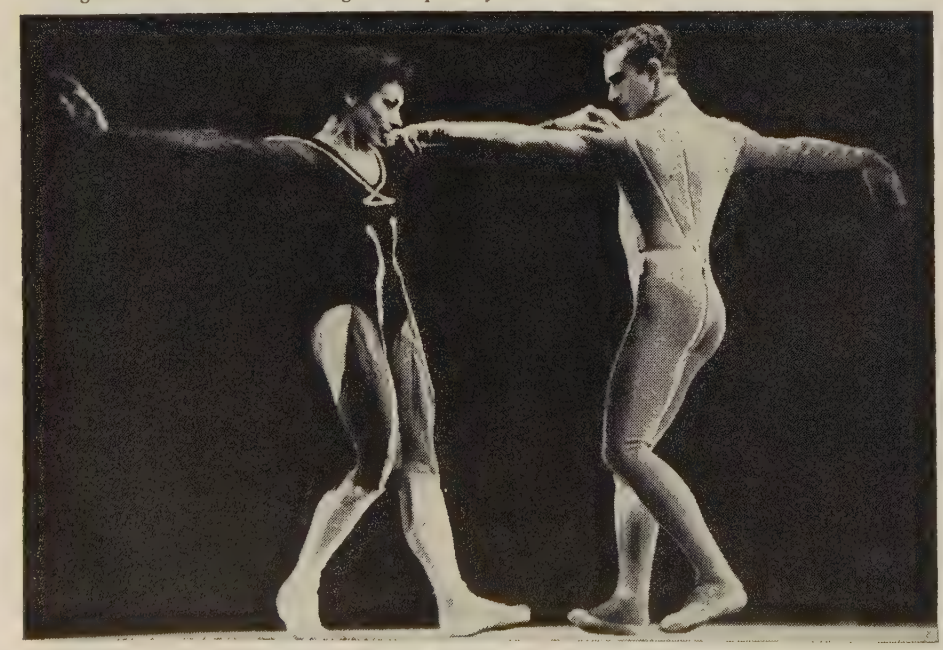
"Thy form is lovely and thine eyes are honeyed . . . Rise . . . before thee Aphrodite stands"
LUPE SERRANO MICHAEL MAULE
Borree, Enoch, Wilson.

CELEBRATION

". . . happy bridegroom. Now dawned that day . . . When in thine arms thou'lt hold . . . the maiden of thy dreams"
SCOTT DOUGLAS
ELIZABETH CARROLL
Borree, Enoch, Wilson, Barra, Duggan, Martinez.

STILL another work originally presented during American Ballet Theatre's Workshop season during May 1957, this, too, was reported in our August issue of that year as "a work abounding in inventiveness with many passages that are full of beautiful and flowing phrases of movement". This holds more true now even though the dancers in their white leotards, wigs and make-up, often give the impression of dancing statues. Though Ross's choice of Chausson's music as a background for this danced enactment of Sappho's verses may be questioned artistically, it is, nevertheless, a perfectly beautiful work, and this is especially true of the *pas de deux* in the second section.

JOURNEY : *Nora Kaye and Scott Douglas in Kenneth MacMillan's ballet which also had its first performance with Ballet Theatre Workshop. With designs by Nicholas Georgiadis it is now in the regular repertory.*



Journey

First public performance in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House, by American Ballet Theatre, on September 22, 1958. Choreography by Kenneth MacMillan. Music by Béla Bartók (for Strings, Percussion and Celeste). Designed by Nicholas Georgiadis.

1. Premonition
2. Three Messengers of Death
3. Journey
4. Judgment

NORA KAYE
JOHN KRIZA ERIK BRUHN
SCOTT DOUGLAS
Andrina Miller, Susan Borree, Nadine Revene, Ivan Allen, Richard Beaty, Charles Bennett, Larry Boyette, Joseph Carrow, Bill Carter, Lawrence Gradus, William Guske, Darrell Notara, Paul Sutherland, George Tomal, Steve Wiland.

WHEN this work was originally presented to an invitation audience by American Ballet Theatre's Workshop in May, 1957, this reviewer reported in our August issue last year that "this work was replete with some of the most inventive and unusual dance movement to be seen in a ballet in several seasons in New York". Now, with its subdued but stunning scenery and costumes that have been designed by Nicholas Georgiadis, it emerges as a major work and certainly one of the three most important of the current season.

Death is its subject — from the earliest premonition to the final judgment — and this is magnificently conceived by MacMillan in his choreography, which, incidentally, is far and away the best that we have yet been shown by him here. Similarly, Nora Kaye is nothing short of superb in the central rôle and she was given admirable support by Royes Fernandez, Scott Douglas, John Kriza and a *corps* of twelve men.

Tristan

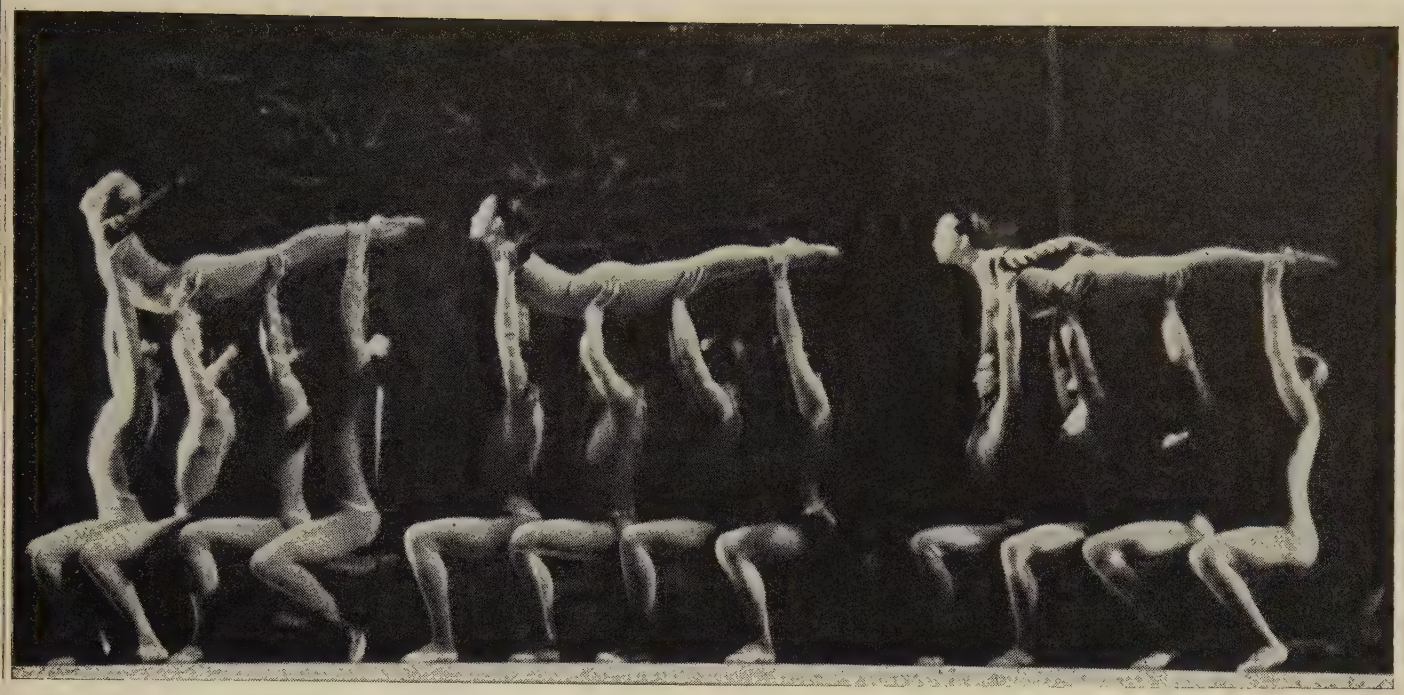
First given at the Metropolitan Opera House, by American Ballet Theatre, on September 23, 1958. Choreography by Herbert Ross. Music by Richard Wagner. Scenery by Oliver Smith. Costumes by Miles White. Book based on Thomas Mann's Tristan.

The Place : Einfried, the sanatorium.
"O night of love, sink downwards and enfold them, grant them the oblivion they crave, release them from this world of partings and betrayals."
NORA KAYE ERIK BRUHN

HERBERT ROSS endeavoured to set Thomas Mann's *Tristan* to Wagner's *Liebestod* and the result was a disaster. Set in a sanatorium, two dying tubercular patients reached out for each other in a frenzy of wild desire before they expired. Oliver Smith's Hollywood-like version of a hospital room and Miles White's chic costumes did not help at all. One could only feel deeply sorry that Nora Kaye and Erik Bruhn had to be wasted in such maudlin bathos.

Variations for Four

First given by American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, on September 25, 1958. Choreography by Anton Dolin. Music by Marguerite Keogh, orchestrated by R. Temple Savage. Costumes by Tom Lingwood.



JOURNEY : *Another group from MacMillan's ballet, to Bartók music, which concerns phases of death from early premonition to the final judgment.*

JOHN KRIZA ERIK BRUHN
SCOTT DOUGLAS
ROYES FERNANDEZ

AS originally given by London's Festival Ballet, this exhibition piece was reviewed at length in *Dance and Dancers* in November 1957. Unfortunately its American translation just did not come off at all, due chiefly, perhaps, to the fact that it was danced by men completely dissimilar in style to those it was originally created for. The music was, at the most, serviceable; the costumes were gaudy and unbecoming. The whole idea of seeing four men cavorting about the stage seemed, to an American audience at any rate, to have a slightly unhealthy tinge. Erik Bruhn, Scott Douglas and Royes Fernandez did the best they could, which was considerable, but John Kriza was embarrassingly inept.

The rest of Ballet Theatre's Season

FOR its three-week season at the Metropolitan Opera House, the American Ballet Theatre set a record for the biggest box office receipts per performance in the past thirteen years. The total for the twenty performances was $155,165, averaging $8,758 per performance, which is remarkable indeed when one remembers that three ballet companies were playing simultaneously in New York at the time. More important than this, however, at least from an artistic point of view, is the fact that at least three of the six new works presented—Kenneth MacMillan's *Journey,* Birgit Culberg's *Miss Julie* and Herbert Ross's *Paean* — are works of major importance. (These, as well as Herbert Ross's *Tristan* and Anton Dolin's *Variations for Four,* are reviewed elsewhere in this issue.) Moreover, the guest appearances of such distinguished artists as Alicia Markova, Alicia Alonso, Igor Youskevitch and Claude Bessy added immeasurably to the season as a whole.

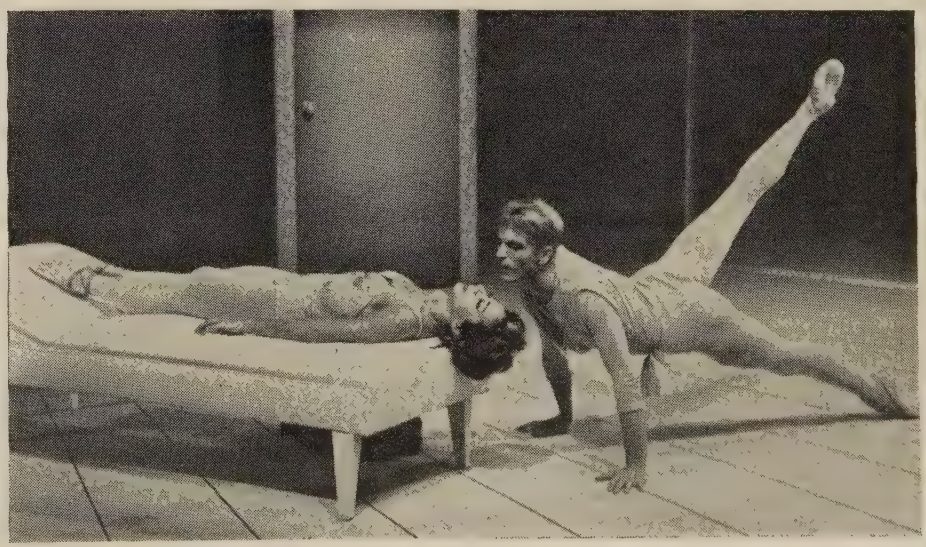
ONE of the major highlights of Ballet Theatre's season was Alicia Markova's appearance in *Giselle* with Erik Bruhn, and their first performance of this ballet had the capacity audience cheering. (Their second performance, due to no fault of their own, was not quite so magical due to conductor Samuel Krachmalnnicks' conducting, which was arbitrary and deliberate, to put it mildly, with no regard or interest evidenced in the artists on stage.) Writing of their première performance in *The New York Times,* John Martin said: "The woman (Markova) is an artist; a fact that, curiously enough, is always news no matter how many times one has discovered it before." Likewise hailing Erik Bruhn, Martin reported: "He has grown tremendously in it . . . but he has retained the elegance, the dignity and the dramatic conviction that were his at the beginning." Again, Lupe Serrano danced her rôle as Myrtha brilliantly.

Alicia Markova also danced magnificently in *Les Sylphides* and *Pas de Quatre.* In the former she literally floated through the proceedings like a breeze, while in the latter she had the grace, charm and elegance of a nineteenth century lithograph reborn. Perhaps it is because of the very act of rebirth that Markova brings to every rôle she graces that she remains inimitable and irreplaceable, and this is why she continues to enchant her legions of admirers in America.

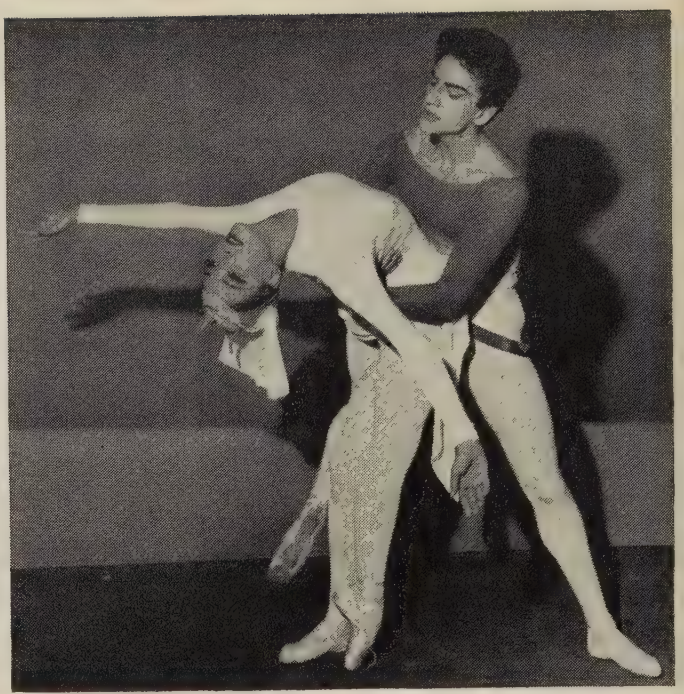
ANOTHER of the major delights of the season was the delightful Violette Verdy, who was completely winning and wonderful in everything that she did. (New York audiences, with whom she is already a great favourite, will have the opportunity of seeing her with the New York City Ballet, beginning November 25, where she will be dancing while American Ballet Theatre is planning for its 1959-1960 seasons and tours.) Another young artist who has made a major impression this season is the handsome and extremely talented Royes Fernandez, who has admirable placement and strong technical prowess. Progressing

Continued on page 39 — column three

TRISTAN : *Nora Kaye and Eric Bruhn as the two tubercular patients in a sanatorium from Ross's ballet based on a story of Thomas Mann.*



CHIMERE : *Janine Charrat, as the Chimera, in her ballet with music by Jacques Thièrac.* *Photo : Lido.*



FRANCESCA DA RIMINI : Hélène Trailine, as Francesca, and Juan Giuliano, as Paolo, in Serge Lifar's ballet. *Photo : Lido.*

New Ballets in Paris

Reviewed by MARIE-FRANCOISE CHRISTOUT

THREE FROM BALLETS DE JANINE CHARRAT

THE personality and reputation of Janine Charrat are so well known and esteemed that one can be certain that any new work of hers will be interesting and sympathetically produced. She is by no means a strict heiress of the classical tradition in modern French ballet: she is better thought of as being an ingenious renovator of this tradition.

Absent from Paris for several years, she gave a too brief return season at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées on October 3. Unhappily once again this particular stage proved fatal for her, and she received an indifferent reception. Before discussing in detail many of the praises and criticisms which her works invite, it is appropriate to seek the cause of this unjust reticence by the Parisian public, which has become, in fact, too sceptical and blasé.

Certainly her return visit was not sufficiently well prepared. The last-minute defection of Josette Clavier, who was replaced by the charming Tessa Beaumont, upset the balance of the small company. The success of the now legendary Ballets des Champs Elysées was due to a union of talents. Since then, however, excessive individualism has not brought the results many expected of it : everyone has tried it and with few rewards. Furthermore, certain of the ballets in Charrat's programmes were obscure; the theme of philosophical allegory was overdone, especially the gloomy surroundings of this type of ballet. In these there was no moment for relaxation.

Finally, Janine Charrat could have profited by restaging some of her works already praised abroad and formerly applauded in Paris, such as *Le Massacre des Amazones, Concerto* (Grieg), and *Les Algues.*

Whatever the outcome, the works of a choreographer of her quality are always worth serious consideration. Certain critics thirsting for strange novelties from abroad exercise without doubt a destructive influence, and by their harsh criticisms tend to suppress the most gifted representatives of the young French school. It is just as well that Janine Charrat has been praised elsewhere. She will never be judged more severely than she has been by those who should understand her and who should strive to encourage her. Of the five works staged, three deserve special attention, *Chimère, Les Liens* and *Francesca da Rimini.*

Chimere

Ballet by Thamara de Letay. Music by Jacques Thièrac. Décors and costumes by Thamara de Letay. Choreography by Janine Charrat.

The Chimera ..... JANINE CHARRAT
The Young Man ... ADOLFO ANDRADE
Love ..... LAURA PROENCA
Glory ..... ELBURG KAREL
Fortune ..... CATHERINE VERNEUIL
Friendship ... MILJENKO BANOVITCH

IN this ballet which is created in the neo-classic style, the Young Man is confronted by a bewitching Chimera, brought to life with a fluidity and suppleness by Janine Charrat herself. In turn the Chimera brings to life before him the various characters of Fortune, Love, Glory and Friendship which, one after another, dissolve into nothingness. We are faced with the complete intellectual allegory ; a style of ballet sown in the French school of the 17th century. In this work, however, the atmosphere has been extended and made more bitter and tormented than in Lifar's *Les Mirages,* a work with which one can compare its scenario. However a different treatment is given to the development of the action.

Variations, pas de deux and *pas de trois* alternate smoothly. The pure lines sing, although sometimes without proving themselves to be as expressive as one would have hoped. Janine Charrat, poetic and elusive, dominates the work by her interpretation, and she is greatly helped by the virile and serious Adolfo Andrade.

While Jacques Thièrac's music is suitable for the ballet, the same cannot be said of Thamara de Letay's costumes, which suffer from over-ornamented decoration and thus annul the general harmony.

Les Liens

Music by Ivan Séménof. Décors and costumes by Bernard Daydé. Theme and choreography by Janine Charrat.

The Woman ..... JANINE CHARRAT
The Man ..... ADOLFO ANDRADE
Destiny ..... ELBURG KAREL

ONCE again allegory is triumphant. Relentlessly influenced by Destiny, the Man and Woman try in vain to escape him. The Man releases himself too late to save his companion, who perishes, leaving him in hopeless solitude.

In this ballet the arrangement of Bernard Daydé's ingenious scenery takes on an important rôle in the choreography. In effect the two principal characters are entwined in long elastic cords which allow them to execute the most complex movements. They are connected to a gigantic spider-web in the centre of which waits Destiny, anonymous and motionless. In the choreography the arms play an important part, the lifts are adroitly conceived, and the *enchaînements* are constantly varied. To their symbolic characters, Charrat and Andrade bring a dramatic and credible authority.

Séménof's score is interesting and in harmony with the work. *Les Liens* will remain without any doubt the most original and accomplished of the new ballets created this season by Janine Charrat.

Francesca da Rimini

Ballet in two scenes based on a theme of Dante. Music by Tchaikovsky. Décors and costumes by Félix Labisse. Choreography by Serge Lifar.

Francesca ..... HELENE TRAILINE
Paolo ..... JUAN GIULIANO
The Duke of Rimini ..... LEON DE PIAN
Dante, Virgil, Knights, etc.

AFTER two abstract allegories it was pleasant to discover once again, in the steps of Dante, human warmth as an equally suitable ingredient in drama. Using Tchaikovsky's score, Lifar can be considered to have constituted this work as a pendant to *Romeo and Juliet*; perhaps as the second panel of the diptych. However, on this occasion he has preferred to use a more narrative and direct approach to the allusive.

Led into Hell by Virgil, Dante meets the unfortunate lovers, Francesca and Paolo. At his request they agree to retrace their lives — by the very apt use of the flashback technique. Thus in the shadow of a scheming Duke, the idyll is sketched and passion gushes forth.

The psychological subtleties are perfectly expressed in a *grand pas de deux* in which the action is developed in the choreography. The drama glows brilliantly until the curtain falls on a vision of the two lovers, now the prey to infernal torments.

Designed with restraint, this fine work is both original and representative of Lifar's style. It suffers a little, however, from a not entirely satisfactory distribution of the actual dances; but what it loses here it gains from very expressive interpretation. Hélène Traîline dances with intelligence and restraint, and Juan Giuliano was noticed for his elevation and elegance, although he still lacks dramatic ability. Félix Labisse's décors and costumes were modestly appropriate.

IT is hardly worth saying much about *Arlequin*, a rough sketch quickly forgotten, and danced by Tessa Beaumont and Léon de Pian as the opening ballet. On the other hand, the version of *Le Mandarin Merveilleux* by the Hungarian choreographer, Erno Vashéguy, went completely against the fantastic atmosphere of the work and the intentions of its composer.

Carried away by his own personality, the choreographer himself danced the name rôle, but depicted it on broad lines as a rather vulgar Oriental, thus depriving the ballet of the grotesque and brilliant atmosphere desired by Bartók. Véra Pazhtor was a rather banal prostitute — a little afraid of the the too-ardent client. This production will not make anyone forget Parlic's very remarkable version as presented by the Belgrade Opera Ballet and brilliantly interpreted by Dusanka Sifnios.

The Edinburgh Debacle

The British ballet public has been worried by the fact that the Edinburgh Festival Ballet, which started with such promise and with favourable critical acclaim, should have had to fold up a few days before it embarked on its first London season at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. We have tried to find out as many facts as possible as to why this should have happened.

AS most people know by now, the Edinburgh Festival decided to put on a season of ballet during which time 12 new creations would be shown. This was in place of the usual international ballet companies that have appeared each year since the festival's inception. The choreographers were taken from various countries and each work was allowed to have two stars with an international name. In addition there was a small permanent company for soloist and *corps de ballet* work. The director of the company was Michael Frostick; Peggy Van Praagh was the dance director and Charles Mackerras the musical director. The Edinburgh Festival was prepared to back the company up to somewhere in the region of £10,000, which is about the amount they usually pay for large international companies.

The preliminary work which had to be undertaken was immense and included at least one of the directors making continual trips to various places so as to make all the arrangements with the choreographers and dancers concerned. In addition the sum allotted had to cover the cost of 12 ballets (scenery, costumes, musicians' and choreographers' fees), five weeks' rehearsal in London and three in Edinburgh, not to mention the costs always attendant on forming a company with orchestra. Then of course the guest artists and choreographers' fees had to be paid, their fares and subsistence.

So by the time the company arrived in Edinburgh it became obvious that the original sum was not enough. Frostick then had to look around and see where he could find more money. The Arts Council said that they could help next year, various other people and concerns offered to stand as guarantors, and this included a guarantee of £2,100 from the Edinburgh Festival itself. But although it was not apparent at the time, it was already too late. However the company was covered until the end of the Festival. In fact the whole project had been highly successful and the future appeared to be bright with a London season ahead and the promise of extended European tours and a return to Edinburgh next year.

Then the company went to Holland without a break and four one-night stands without a guarantee. And although the expenses were not high, the lack of considerable backing was making itself felt. Then the company moved on to Zurich and had a tremendous triumph. This was followed by a 24-hour train journey to Yugoslavia, where the company stayed ten days and gave twelve performances. The success had been great but the excessive cost of transport over such long distances, added to the fact that it is impossible to bring money out of Yugoslavia, had taken their full toll of the exchequer. There was literally no money at all. Mercifully the dancers had round-trip tickets so they were able to get back to London all right. The scenery and costumes were not so lucky and they were held by the transport company.

So the company arrived back thinking that they would open at the Sadler's Wells Theatre three days later. But at Sadler's Wells things were no more cheerful as there was only a 4% advance in the box office. By this time the bank, as well as the transport company, were wanting their dues, and they refused any further overdraft. In these circumstances it became apparent that it would have been impossible to open at Sadler's Wells on the date announced. So there was no alternative but to cancel the season — the time limit was too short.

However, the Sadler's Wells Trust, anxious to help out, sprang to the rescue, guarantors were found and the Arts Council promised £200. It was then announced that there would be three special performances in what would have been the second week of the company's season. The artists agreed to appear for the minimum equity fee and Paula Hinton and Yvonne Meyer offered to dance their rôles in *The Night and Silence* and *La Belle Dame sans Merci* without a fee. It seemed as though London might, in the end, get to see the Edinburgh company. But after a press statement went out to the effect that the three-night season would take place, more troubles broke out and so again the whole thing had to be cancelled.

It was a sad end to what was a splendid project and readers can form their own conclusions as to the lessons to be learnt from it all.

SCOTTISH TRIUMPH : At the same time that the Edinburgh International Ballet was in financial trouble, the Highland dancers of the Scots Guards were having a sweeping success in New York and across America and Canada. Here they are in a Sword Dance.

Musicality with Bravura

by JOHN PERCIVAL

BRIAN SHAW in Birthday Offering.
Photo : Vivienne.

OF the two dozen dancers who headed the Sadler's Wells Ballet when it invaded Covent Garden in 1946, not many now remain. Fonteyn and Somes, Farron, Larsen, Edwards, White — and Brian Shaw. This makes Shaw sound much older than he is. To correct the false impression, we should remember that he is four years younger than Serge Golovine and rather less than two years older than John Gilpin.

Shaw in 1946 was, in fact, the new boy on the list of leading dancers, the unknown factor in the company's strength. A study of my old programmes and notebooks reveals that I had already seen him in *Les Patineurs* (as one of the boys in brown), in the *Swan Lake* czardas and the *Coppélia* mazurka, and in half a dozen smaller parts besides. He had also danced in a performance of *Les Sylphides* for the R.A.D. Production Club. At the Opera House, newly promoted to soloist billing, he appeared as a cavalier and as Puss-in-Boots in *The Sleeping Beauty*. All of which gave no warning at all of what was to happen on April 24, 1946.

That was, of course, the first night of *Symphonic Variations*. It is not very easy to explain now exactly why that was so exciting an occasion. There was something more than the feeling that attends the production of any good new ballet. It was not as if the repertory, although heavily weighted with mimed dramas, had no ballets of sheer exhilarating dancing. There was *Les Patineurs*, for instance, and there had until recently been *Les Rendezvous*, in both of which Harold Turner was still giving performances which were far from contemptible. But *Symphonic Variations* showed a new nobility, a new beauty, which went beyond these works and suddenly affirmed that ballet was more than the bright entertainment discovered by thousands of ordinary people during the war. *Symphonic Variations* proved once more, and to a new audience, that ballet could be an important and serious art, and it was this, I think, which made those early performances so overwhelming in their effect.

The ballet has been far better danced in later seasons, but in 1946 a special aura of success hung over it. When Shaw, for the first time, leapt forward for his brief solo, when he circled the stage with that crisp, clean series of *coupés jetés*, when he spun in those *pirouettes* which so exactly match an almost despairing phrase in the music, the occasion added lustre to what was already an honest, capable and finished performance. We saw, in effect, the epitome of Shaw's whole future career.

There is nothing very sensational technically about Shaw's solo in *Symphonic Variations*. I suppose any boy graduating from a reputable ballet school nowadays could get through it quite competently. Unfortunately I can imagine nobody — literally nobody — in the whole of English ballet who could dance it in the way that Shaw dances it. The secret, of course, is in the music. Shaw does not simply dance to the music, taking its rhythm or phrasing as a framework which his steps must fit. He dances *with* the music, apparently swept along in the pulse and flow of its current. The *manège* of *coupés jetés* which I mentioned earlier is a supreme example of this. Each movement the dancer makes has the sharp precision with which the individual notes of the music ring out at this point in the score, yet the passage as a whole flows with the smoothness of the complete musical phrase.

In the final passages of *Symphonic Variations*, too, Shaw revealed the innate musicianship which illuminates his dancing. Towards the end, the music takes on an air of rejoicing, and the ballet becomes a paean — in praise, perhaps, of man's goodness and nobility. From the first, Fonteyn and Shaw reflected this change of mood in their dancing. It is not a matter of smiling to express happiness; it is something deeper, a way of dancing happily. Like much of Shaw's dancing, it can more easily be recognised than described.

Like Fonteyn, Shaw has usually been seen to best advantage in the 19th-century classics and in the ballets of Frederick Ashton. This is because his strength lies in his ability to bring a distinction of his own to classical dancing, whether of a lyrical or of a straightforward virtuoso nature. His physique — a trifle short; stockily well-knit and sturdy rather than elegant in build — has robbed him of the opportunity to dance those romantic leading rôles for which his proud but modest bearing and strong sense of style might otherwise have fitted him. There remains for him, however, a range of parts by no means negligible.

On the one hand there are the virtuoso dances in the classic ballets: *Bluebird pas de deux*, "peasant" *pas de deux* in *Giselle*, and *Swan Lake pas de trois*. As Bluebird, Shaw's soaring elevation in the variation is quite out of the ordinary; all the more so because of the way he firmly maintains the beautifully curved arc of his body throughout the trajectory of the *temps de poisson*, thus clearly suggesting the idea of flight. in dancing them equally well.

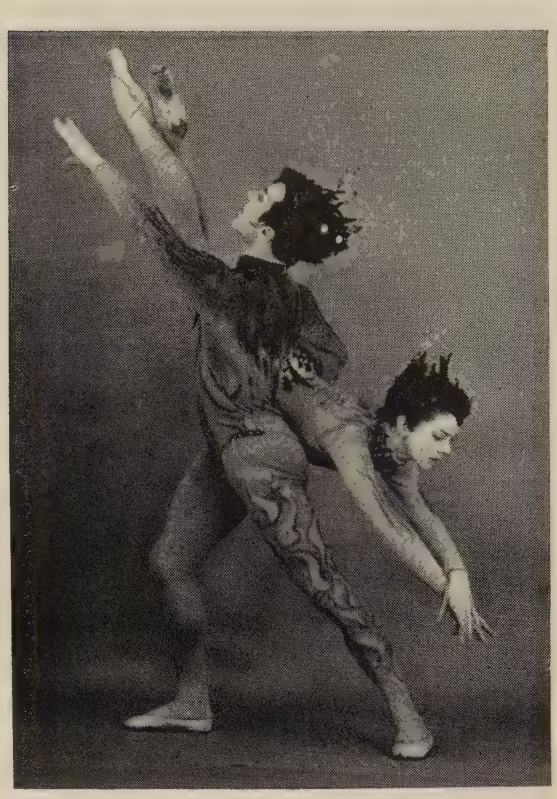
In *Giselle*, his elevation is equally well used, the forcefulness of his upward leaps and the thrust of his outflung leg imparting an appropriately powerful quality to his dancing. The two variations given to the man in this *pas de deux*, both based mainly on various steps of elevation and separated only by the girl's brief solo, are a searching test of a dancer's stamina, but Shaw during the last season has consistently succeeded, not only in dancing each of them well, but in dancing them equally well.

Closely related to these classic rôles are many of the parts Shaw dances in ballets by Ashton. Thus, just as he suggests flight in his *Bluebird* solo, so he gives the equally convincing impression of a fish's movement through water in his solo in *Homage to the Queen*. This he achieves partly again with the aid of his elevation, the ease of his leaps making him seem to move through the air like a creature in his native element, rising and falling as a fish does in water; and partly, too, by the extreme fluency he gives to all his movements, most marked in the rather slow *pirouettes* at the end.

The solo in *Homage*, like his rôle in *Symphonic Variations*, was made to measure for Shaw's abilities. As the Jester in *Cinderella* and as the leading man in *Scènes de Ballet* Shaw took over parts created by Ashton for two other dancers as different as Grant and Somes. As the Jester he needs only a final touch of bravado added to his beautifully finished dancing and sensitive

IN SCENES DE BALLET.
Photo : Houston Rogers.

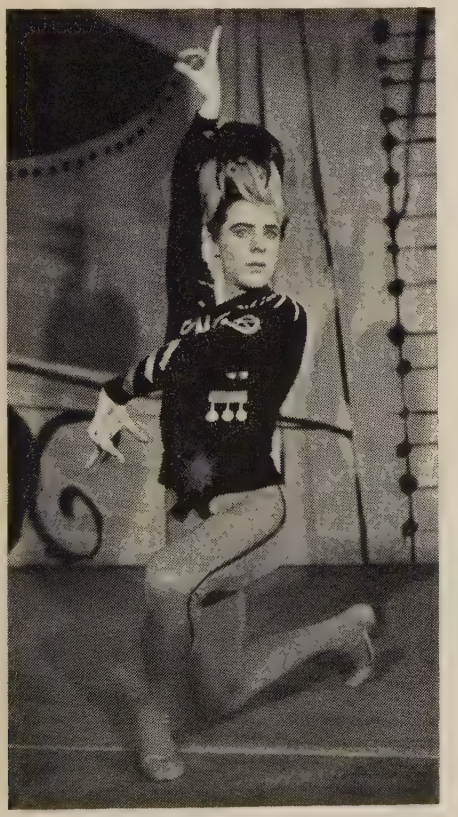
IN GISELLE : *No dancer in the Royal Ballet has been able to bring such soaring quality and power to the two variations in the "Peasant"* pas de deux. *Photo : Baron.*



IN PRINCE OF THE PAGODAS *with Maryon Lane in the "Fire"* pas de deux *in the second act. Photo : Tony Armstrong Jones.*

characterisation to make him Grant's equal, and in *Scènes* he proved the only dancer since Somes to bring out the lyrical qualities of the rôle. His one fault in this ballet was a slight lack of precision in a series of *doubles tours en l'air.* This step was, for quite a time, a weak link in an otherwise strong all-round technique, but Shaw seems now to have mastered his difficulties with it and I suspect that it caused him trouble in this ballet only because the music dictates at that point a staccato phrasing which does not come easily to so fluent a dancer.

IN NOCTAMBULES *as the Soldier from MacMillan's ballet. Photo : Michael Dunne.*



Apart from his created parts, however, the Ashton rôle which Shaw has made most securely his own is the blue boy in *Les Patineurs,* in spite of the fact that this is a rôle where the competition is exceptionally keen. But even Turner, for whom it was made, did not bring to the part more zest, more wit or more brilliance. The virtuosity of Shaw's leaps, in one solo, almost upside down with his feet much higher than his head, is equalled by the perfect timing of his comic exit immediately after. The bounding ease with which he soars round the stage is matched by the speed and perfect balance of his final *pirouettes.* Every aspect of his performance contributes to make this one of the most perfect exhibitions of dancing to be seen in any company anywhere today.

With a dancer of Shaw's gifts, it is only natural that most of the choreographers making parts for him should want to emphasise his brilliant solo dancing. Howard created a solo for him in *Veneziana* which no-one else has danced so well as he; Cranko did the same thing in *The Shadow,* and in the Fire scene of *Prince of the Pagodas* demanded of him not only a characteristically taxing solo but also some eccentrically difficult and apparently dangerous partnering in a *pas de deux* with Maryon Lane, tackled by both dancers with quiet aplomb.

It was Cranko, however, who in 1952 also provided Shaw with the opportunity, in *Bonne-Bouche,* to play a mainly dramatic part as the luckless hero. Shaw had already shown himself in small rôles — the peasant boy with dirty hands in *A Wedding Bouquet,* the Russian son in *La Boutique Fantasque* — to be capable of a developed characterisation full of warmth, humour and unobtrusive detail. Given the chance to work on a bigger scale, Shaw in *Bonne-Bouche* was both funny and touching by turns as the part demanded. He showed the same qualities as the Barber in *Mam'zelle Angot,* which he first danced at about the same time.

In the six years since then, Shaw has had few opportunities to develop this side of his work. Frantz in *Coppélia,* in which he now gives a more than acceptable performance; the first listless, then vaingloriously aggressive soldier in MacMillan's *Noctambules* and as Petrushka.

I should be the last to advocate that Shaw should spend all his time on rôles of this sort, but the chance to tackle something outside his usual range is often an invaluable stimulus to a dancer. In the case of one who is usually cast in pure dancing rôles, this is more than ever important. For if the dancer fails to project an engaging personality, a sense of purpose and achievement, an understanding of dramatic and theatrical values, the most brilliant display of technique will seem hollow. Luckily, with Shaw, these virtues have never been absent.

There is a joyousness in Shaw's dancing; there are speed and *ballon,* ease, lightness and fluency. There is an unaffected simplicity in his manner which ought to be the envy of some *danseurs nobles;* there is a deep feeling for classicism with all the dash and bravura of the *demi-caractère* dancer. Above all there is his musicality, which provides both the strong base on which his performances are built and the light irradiating them all from within.

Equipped with these qualities, Shaw is secure in his position. More than twelve years after the re-opening of Covent Garden his name is still in the list of soloists, but now nearly at its head. He is just thirty, with the best years of his career still before him.

AGED ELEVEN: Adopted by her uncle, Adeline Genée was given her first stage experience as a child in his touring company. This picture was taken in Copenhagen.

AT THE EMPIRE: Here she is seen in the ballet Alaska — inspired by the *the Klondyke Gold Rush — at the Empire in 1898.*

BACK TO COPENHAGEN: In 190[illegible] Genée was invited as guest artist to dan[illegible] at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. H[illegible] strong technique astonished the Dani[illegible] dancers.

Adeline Genée—d[illegible]

ON last January 6, Dame Adeline Genée was eighty. A Danish d[illegible] she studied with her aunt and uncle, Alexander Genée, and mad[illegible] debut in Copenhagen, then Christiania, at the age of ten. After cons[illegible] able success in Stettin, Berlin and Munich, she was engaged as balleri[illegible] the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square, London, in 1897. Here[illegible] remained for ten years and was adored by everyone. Without any que[illegible] her appearances built up an interest in ballet which has remained wit[illegible] British public to this day. After tours of America, Australia and [illegible]

AS SWANILDA (left): It was in Délibes' Coppélia *that Genée was remembered above all else by frequenters of the Empire. The ballet had been given in London only once before, in 1884, but created no great impression. The Empire revival, which was produced by Genée's uncle, Alexander Genée, was the first important production London had seen and in many ways bore a similarity to the present Danish version. Genée's performance as Swanilda inspired Max Beerbohm to write his only piece of ballet criticism.*

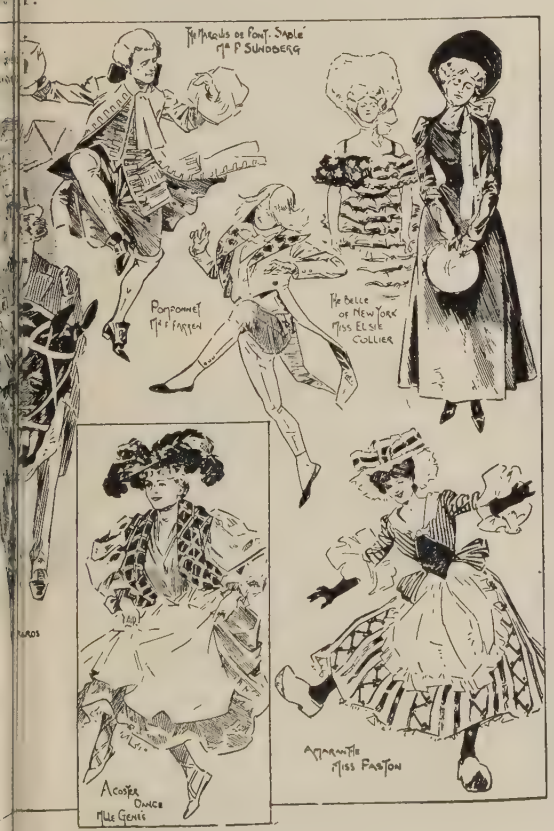
MILLINER DUCHESS: *Charles ...el's drawing of Genée in her dance ...quetterie" from a 1903 Empire pro...on. This rôle also gave her oppor... to display her gifts as an actress.*

HIGH JINKS: *In 1904, this ballet followed* The Milliner Duchess *and included the famous Hunting Dance and a cake-walk. This costume is for the latter and was probably one of the loveliest ever designed by C. Wilhelm.*

CLASSICAL VARIATION: Another dance from High Jinks *and another costume by Wilhelm, who designed every costume Genée wore from her London début until her retirement.*

...ing of the Empire

...nd, she retired from the stage in 1914. She was the first dancer to ...onoured with a D.B.E., she was the first President of the Royal ...emy of Dancing and has behind her a career of a duration that has ...m been equalled. This career has now been chronicled by Ivor Guest ...s latest book, reviewed on page 30, in which he had the collaboration ...ame Adeline herself, who gave him access to her personal archives ...notes. The pictures on this page give some idea of her extraordinary ...r.



THE BELLE OF THE BALL *(left): This 1907 Empire production was set in Covent Garden Market early in the morning. As the day's work begins, revellers make their way home after a fancy dress ball. The music was selected from light operas. These drawings illustrate some of the scenes from the ballet in which Genée's coster dance reminds us of her versatility. The dwarf on the left is Pyllis Bedells, who was later to become an Empire ballerina herself.*

AS TAGLIONI (right): In the ballet The Dancer's Adventure, *produced during World War I.*

MAURICE BEJART in his solo — La Voix.

The Left Bank comes to North Devon

France's Le Ballet-Théâtre de Paris de Maurice Béjart, which stems mainly from Montparnasse, the fertile left bank of the Seine, appeared in Britain for the first time at this year's Devon Festival.

by PETER WILLIAMS

BEING a true Cornishman I, together with nearly every other inhabitant of the Duchy, look on Devon as being the no-man's land between my country and England. Now I am almost forced to change my opinion. A county which has, for six years, managed to survive the storms and complications attendant on any festival presentation is obviously no no-man's land. To be able to bring to country districts, and with success, so many notable artists and companies with a regard to their quality rather than to their popular appeal, is something in its way as spirited as the roving of those great Elizabethan Devonians — Drake and Raleigh.

At Barnstaple, where the rivers Taw and Torridge flow to the Bristol Channel, they have already during the six years shown Ballet Rambert twice, with world premières, a group of dancers with Beryl Grey and numerous operatic and theatrical presentations. They are also lucky in having a mayor, Mr. MacDavid, whose interest in ballet stretches far beyond the confines of his ancient borough.

It was as surprising as it was gratifying to find that for their sixth festival they were the first people in Britain to capture the services of Maurice Béjart's Le Ballet-Théâtre de Paris — a pretty formidable catch I would say — who appeared in both Barnstaple and Exeter between September 25 and October 1. It was a pity that the gentlemen of the Press who arrived to see the performances were more concerned by the fact that the announced English première of Béjart's three-act *Orphée* could not take place, owing to the smallness of the stage, rather than with the work they were actually shown. In fact, apart from *Le Teck,* which was once shown on TV, all the works were quite new to the British public and probably to most critics. As it was, one world première — *Juliette* — was given during the three-day Barnstaple season.

A year has passed since I first saw Béjart's company, when it was at the Marigny Theatre in Paris. During the intervening months the company has played incessantly with growing success across the continent of Europe — in Italy, Germany and the Low Countries. It has been received with wild acclaim by both public and critics. During the intervening months also the repertory has been considerably enlarged and become more varied, though owing to the lack of space on the Devonian stages we were not shown the major fruits of Béjart's creative force.

On re-assessing the qualities of his work I find that the word "Théâtre" is the most significant in the company's title. Every work, whether it be a solo or a full-company piece, has been conceived with an eye to creating a violent theatrical impact. To achieve this, Béjart has discarded many of the accepted rules of ballet making, and particularly with regard to the music.

A popular belief has grown up amongst those who have never seen the company that everything Béjart does is to *musique concréte.* In fact, he uses every kind of sound to achieve his effects — the human voice, classical music, jazz, all interspersed with *concréte* music. In a strange way these various forms of sound achieve a remarkable unity as the choreography and the dramatic situations bind them all together.

Having now seen more of Béjart's works I find that his vocabulary is more limited than I had at first thought. Though there is little wrong with a limited vocabulary — and few great creators worked on a smaller range of steps than Michel Fokine — I find that occasionally some of his movements are not always apt. For instance, like so many French choreographers, he is inclined to incessant *pirouettes* for no particular reason. In expressive theatrical ballets such a movement is hardly suitable to anything other than delirium, roundabouts and spinning tops. He also tends to over-use a weaving shoulder movement which appears to come straight from the Kathakali school of Indian dance. But these are not too serious in works which create such impact that the audience is left with a feeling of a definite experience.

ETUDES RHYTHMIQUES: *Béjart, left, beats out the rhythm for Patrick Belda, the startling young male dancer.*

FIRST PROGRAMME

ETUDES RHYTHMIQUES. *Choreography: Maurice Bejart.*

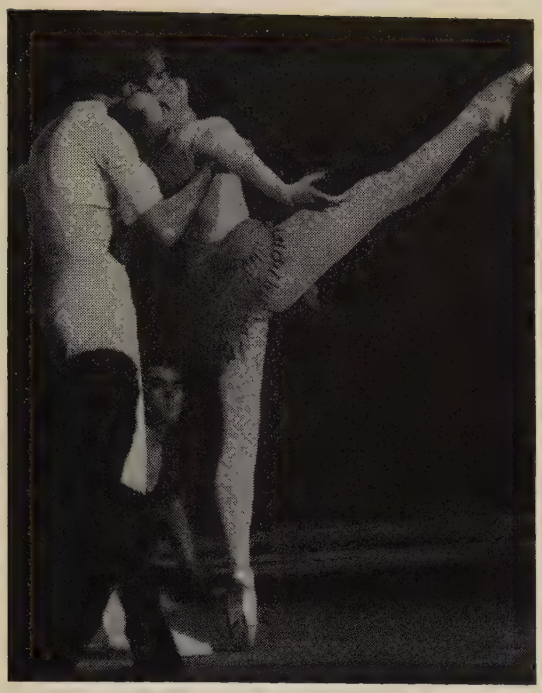
L'ETRANGER. *Choreography: Maurice Béjart. Music: Villa Lobos. Designs: Bernard Daydé.*

CONCERTO. *Choreography: Maurice Béjart. Music: Darius Milhaud. Costumes: Bernard Daydé.*

LA VOIX. *Choreography: Maurice Béjart. Sound Track: Jean Baronet.*

LA SYMPHONIE POUR UN HOMME SEUL. *Choreography: Maurice Béjart. Concrete Music: Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer.*

DANCERS sleep on a darkened and empty stage. The choreographer (Béjart himself) appears beating out a rhythm with



L'ETRANGER : *Antonio Cano, as the Stranger, and Nicole Amigues, as the Woman, in two scenes from Béjart's ballet to Villa Lobos guitar themes.*

a stick, and gradually the dancers come to life forming into the patterns and groups of a daily class. Eventually colour comes to the stage, colour which in a couple of *soli* and a *pas de deux* brings certain emotions to the other almost abstract figures. They in their turn receive the contagion until they are inspired to create their own dances. Life has come to the theatre and, if you want to see a deeper significance stretching beyond the walls of the theatre, life has come to a sleeping world.

In many ways this *Etudes Rhythmiques* has a certain parallel in Lander's *Etudes*. They are both concerned with a class and they both grow away and beyond the classroom. As the Lander work shows the full range of the classical vocabulary so does the Béjart work show the range of his own particular vocabulary, which is a very personal amalgam of classical and modern dance steps. It adds up to an effective opening piece as it is both serious and humorous. The interpolations for the three colours — Red (Seigneuret), Blue (Tania Bari), Yellow (Nicole Amigues and Germinal Cassado) — are possibly less effective than the main body of the work.

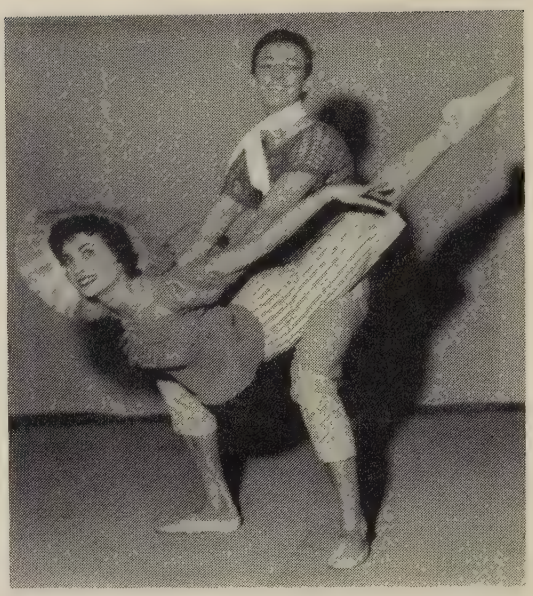
With regard to the dancing, quite outstanding was Patrick Belda. This boy was a child prodigy when Béjart had his first season at the Théâtre de L'Etoile a few years ago. Now he is 16 and has developed. He is tall and slender with the look of a young Picasso clown of the Blue period or almost any male in an El Greco painting. His technique is phenomenal, particularly in his jumps and turns, and he also has a certain sense of style. At the moment he is weak in *epaulement* and the upper part of his body needs attention, but he has star quality if ever I saw it. I would say he needs a far stricter classical training than he is ever likely to receive with an itinerant company of this kind. The rest of the company danced with the sort of virile violence that is stimulating to watch even if the purist might find it less precise than what we are used to from native companies. There is a vitality about French companies which makes an immediate impression on the audience and this one, mainly drawn from local inhabitants who had possibly seen little French ballet, was not slow to become infected by this vitality.

After having seen *L'Etranger*, the second work shown, in Paris last year, I wrote at length in its favour (September *Dance and Dancers*, 1957). Even on the less sympathetic stage in Barnstaple, it still strikes me as being a remarkably effective atmospheric work. The idea, of a girl trying to escape from her background and spurred on by the brief appearance of a mysterious white-clad stranger, is not particularly new; the treatment of it is. The Villa Lobos guitar music creates an extraordinary feeling of heat and lassitude and the jangling of what sound like sleigh-bells makes a suitably unfathomable entrance and exit for the Stranger. Nicole Amigues repeats her performance of the unsettled and dusty blonde and it would be impossible to imagine anyone more suitable — in the beginning she is world-wise and tired but with the appearance of a new interest she becomes transformed into a young and eager girl. Likewise Antonio Cano, whose performance has gained in authority; and Béjart has made good use of this Spanish dancer's background by giving him a certain amount of *zapateado*. This rhythmic stamping creates a sense of urgency and gives accent to a ballet which might otherwise tend to monotony. Béjart has created something that is less violent than most of his major works, and it is obviously invaluable for providing programme contrast, apart from all that it is splendid theatre in its own way.

Concerto, a *pas de deux* for Tania Bari and Jean Blanchard, is a study in neo-classicism and good enough as a programme fill-out. Béjart's use of the Milhaud music proves that he has not forgotten the school in which he was brought up, but I am inclined to think that such pieces have little place in the form of dance-theatre presentation he has now developed. Tani Bari is a beautiful blonde Dutch girl whose progress has been rapid. This was immediately followed by Béjart's solo for himself — *La Voix*. A young man turns on the radio and his reaction to the various stations he gets — ranging from Oriental music to jazz and grand opera — exasperates him to the extent that he finally breaks the set in fury. It is as good an excuse as any for Béjart to display various forms of movement, which he performs with considerable humour. It loses its effect by certain repetition and unnecessary length. Nevertheless this *tour de force*, in every sense of the word, was much to the delight of the audience.

It was *La Symphonie pour un Homme Seul*, the final work in the programme, which first brought Béjart international fame as a choreographer, and it also set the seal on his professional association with that dusky beauty and dancer extraordinary — Michele Seigneuret. It also marked the first really effective entrance of *musique concréte* into ballet. Since then, Béjart has developed his style and his awareness of drama also of the possibilities of unusual accompaniments to the dance. But as *Les Forains* will always be almost a trademark of Roland Petit's work in ballet, so will *"Symphonie"* serve a similar function for Béjart.

Coming as it did at the end of a programme of more recent creations, I could see many movements which have been used to greater effect since. Somehow it all seems to be rather contrived. It really takes us a step further on the path upon which Serge Lifar once made a few tentative steps when he sought to release dance from music in his *Icare*. As a study in which man attempts to reproduce the rhythm of life born within himself, it provides an original idea. It is the fault of its present juxtaposition to other works rather than any particular fault of the work itself that makes it not so startling as of old. Today it achieves its main impact from the performances of both Béjart and Seigneuret, and both are formidable enough to warrant the ballet's continuance. The former brings out all the tragedy and heart-searching of the solitary man, while Seigneuret crystallises all the vicarious moods of eternal woman. Their forceful personalities bring unusual power to the dance. Either as



CHAPEAUX : *Two scenes from the light-hearted ballet about hats. In the picture on the right, Patrick Belda and Evelyn Maubert, the two principals, are seen in a* pas de deux.

a film, alone on television or in a theatre programme with works by other creators, this would retain all the impact which it originally achieved.

SECOND PROGRAMME

CHAPEAUX. *Choreography : Maurice Béjart. Music : Aaron Copland. Costumes : Léon Grieg.*

LE TECK. *Choreography : Maurice Béjart. Music : Jerry Mulligan and Tito Puento. Sculpture : Martha Pan.*

JULIETTE. *Choreography : Maurice Béjart. Designed by Pierre Clayette.*

HAUT VOLTAGE. *Choreography : Maurice Béjart. Book : Pierre Rhallys. Music : Marius Constant and Pierre Henry. Designed by d'Abel Rilliard.*

THAT Béjart is not concerned solely with strange sounds and strong drama was shown in *Chapeaux,* which opened the second programme. This is the oldest game in the world which never fails to amuse children or even people as august as Winston Churchill, who, so far as I can remember, took the gloom off the darkest days of the war by appearing in a series of funny 'ats. The stage is strewn with various forms of millinery which the cast try on and discard. In the end the two principals — Evelyn Maubert and Patrick Belda — are snowed under by even more hats thrown from the wings. It is the sort of charming nonsense which only French choreographers and possibly Walter Gore seem able to get away with. Such works are intended solely for light-hearted enjoyment and should not be considered with undue seriousness. Nevertheless it revealed Evelyn Maubert as an enchanting soubrette who bubbled over with fun and she was most ably assisted by that gangling imp Patrick Belda, while the rest of the company entered into the spirit of the romp. The work made a good contrast to the sinister *Le Teck* which followed.

LE TECK : *A composite photograph of Béjart and Seigneuret which gives some impression of the power of this work for two people.*

A Thamar-like beauty (Michele Seigneuret) uses a diabolical piece of teak sculpture to trap men, but the last of her catches (Béjart) turns the tables on her and in screaming rage she finds herself entrapped. The work was reviewed recently when it was shown on TV in *Chelsea at Nine,* but we weren't shown it all. The complete work as it appears on the stage is infinitely more powerful.

In a different mood again was *Juliette,* which had its world première. Juliette (Tania Bari) is a strange phantom girl; she first appears to a young dancer (Antonio Cano) during class in Paris, presumably at the Studio Wacker, She disappears as mysteriously as she has arrived but reappears when the young man is dreaming of her on a beach during his summer vacation. By this time she has become an obsession. Nightly she is with him on his return to Paris but these visitations take on the form of a nightmare. Her face appears on the walls but the walls break up and he becomes convinced that Juliette is dead. He imagines his family have been responsible and they try to convince us that he has only suffered hallucinations. In desperation he returns to the sea. The wind blows, the waves roar and the gulls cry and he goes towards the sea — out, out towards his vision of Juliette. They are reunited and the sea continues to roar and the only living things left are the seagulls.

Not possibly a very original theme, yet again it is the treatment of it that makes the work most curiously moving. Most of it is in Béjart's more tender vein — the *pas de deux* when Juliette first meets the boy in a Paris classroom is very sensitive. In this scene are also some vignettes of typical characters in any and every dance studio — the person always warming-up near the piano, the person who performs *tours en*

l'air to show off when others are doing something else, the person who omits to do some of the *barre* work, the person who wanders in late. Juliette's entrance, after all but the young man have left, is quiet, and something in the way she takes her stance at the *barre* creates an air of unreality. Again in the first seaside scene, the types are witty, particularly the lady who walks around in a sun-hat with sun-goggles on it and who although we never see her face manages to attract every wayward male in sight. The most original touch of all comes with the four moving walls in the nightmare scenes — each wall bears a picture of half of Juliette's face — which are moved to form and re-form by dancers dressed identically to Juliette's white costume. The entrance of the family, each member of which is pictured on a many-fold screen, was a good idea that did not quite come off owing to the fact that a screen of this size is too cumbersome to get on and off the stage quickly.

As in most of his other works, Béjart uses a mixture of sounds: the human voice for the narrative of "I" (the young man), a hurdy-gurdy tune for Juliette's appearances and a "sea" sound-track with wave noises and crying seagulls for the two beach scenes. As a background it is more direct and with less extraneous sounds than is the case with some of the accompaniments to these ballets — there is more realism in sound and, apart from the nightmare scenes, it is far less harsh. It struck me as being a development of Béjart's musical ideas which first became noticeable, to me at any rate, in his *L'Etranger*.

Pierre Clayette's designs were simple, unaffected and most original. I very much liked the economy by which he suggested a dance studio — by simply hanging a parallelogram-shaped picture of the roofs of Paris, and placing a practical classroom *barre*, against a cyclorama. Instantly a large attic room appeared before us. The scarlet screens in the nightmare part were very well painted and created a frightening almost surrealistic effect. Most memorable of all were his sea scenes, particularly the last one. By using row upon row of twisted white cardboard strips against a blue cyclorama, the illusion of white crested waves was achieved. The fact that they were suspended from battens and that they moved in the backstage draught helped to heighten the illusion. The seagulls overhead were suspended like mobiles and they too apperaed to be hovering in flight. It was this sort of theatrical simplicity that used to make the presentations of the Pitoëffs in Paris, between the two wars, so memorable, and I am very happy to find that this approach to designing still continues. A little ingenuity of this sort is what ballet needs as I had begun to fear that it died out after Bérard's *Les Forains*.

Both Tania Bari and Antonio Cano were well cast as the ballet's protagonists. His typically Spanish well-chiselled features and expressive, though seemingly immobile, face were perfect for the Romantic young man thinking back over the strange love affair. While Bari's beauty and her complete lack of emotion gives Juliette the aura of an affectionate siren — enigmatic in the fact that it is impossible to determine whether she is a deliberate destructive force or a lost soul who has the power to possess and be possessed by a receptive mortal. Both artists brought the feeling of unreality that surrounds the whole work.

On the first two performances it was obvious that a certain amount of adjustment would be needed, and one of the worst faults was that the waits between each scene were too long and this destroyed the continuity and the flow of the work as a whole. It was also unnecessary to have such a long programme note which included the whole English translation of the spoken French narrative. Even if the British audience could not understand the foreign tongue, the work was so expressive that further enlightenment hardly seemed necessary.

From this unusual work to another unusual work, but again a complete contrast. It would be hard to imagine more violent theatre than *Haut Voltage*, which ended the programme. Of this I also wrote at length when I saw it in Paris last year, and I was a bit apprehensive as to whether I should find it so powerful on second viewing. In spite of the fact that some of the scenery had to be omitted on the small Barnstaple stage, the work had lost nothing and remains as ominous and terrifying as ever.

Seigneuret now dances the rôle of the woman who holds the electric fluid which generates her hapless medium, a young man, into making predictions. When she finds the boy's love for a young girl upsets these utterances, she causes the girl's death, only to come to a violent end herself. Previously I saw Tessa Beaumont in this rôle and found it one of the astounding performances of last year; Seigneuret is equally vicious and horrifying and can never fail to give a remarkable performance, but I missed the vixen-like aspect of the former. In the two performances I saw both Patrick Belda and Béjart appeared as the young male medium. Belda is new to the rôle and will obviously improve, but he has all the helpless indetermination of a person whose mind is being sapped by a force he does not understand. Béjart dances it excellently but he looks too world-wise to get caught in the coils of a woman's evil schemes. Tania Bari looked suitably innocent as the girl who loves the boy — and very beautiful. It was a pity, on the first night, that the woman's final piercing scream, as she is electrocuted, was omitted. The reason for this I found was that as *Le Teck* also ended on a scream it was thought a mistake to have two works in the same programme ending like this. However, even without the scream the ballet left the audience momentarly dumbfounded — then they cheered.

To find this ballet company in a small borough amid — and this sticks in my Cornish gullet — some of the most beautiful coastal scenery in southern Britain, was indeed rewarding. I wonder what Devon will find next year to serve up with its famed cream.

HAUT VOLTAGE : *The Young Man, Béjart, watches the girl he loves, Tania Bari, in the picture on the left. On the right, Béjart and Seigneuret, as the woman with the power, in a moment towards the violent end of the ballet.*

CRANKO IN PARIS: John Cranko went over to Paris to mount a new work, Cat's Cradle, *for the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas. He is seen, in the left-hand picture, with George Goviloff, Desmond Heeley (designer), Max André, Génia Melikova and John Addison (composer). In the picture on the right, Cranko is seen with John Taras, the company's ballet master, and some dolls bought at the Marché aux Puces for Heeley's décor. Photos: Lido.*

curtain up!

First time together

FROM time to time both in editorial and in readers' correspondence, there have been appeals in the pages of *Dance and Dancers* for the Modern Dance creators in Britain to try and get together. Now I hear that something is starting up on these lines for the Evening of Modern Dance, to be given at the Park Lane Theatre on November 28-30, will bring at least five of them together in the same programme. Only the European school will be represented as Lilian Harmel and Hilde Holge are exponents of the Mary Wigman method, while Ludmila Mlada, Colin Paterick and Jane Winearls come from the Jooss-Leeder school. Both these schools, of course, stem from Rudolph Von Laban. But the outstanding feature of this school is that the creators develop on their own individual lines — starting with an idea and allowing the dance to impose its own technique and consequently create its own atmosphere.

Whatever the outcome of the three performances in Park Lane it is most certainly a move in the right direction, specially at a time when the theatrical dancing finds itself in rather a rut.

The future lies in books?

EVERY year about this time the annual report of the Arts Council sparks off a lot of discussion about the financial plight of the arts in Britain. Usually nothing is done until a famous company like the Sadler's Wells Opera proves the gloomy forecasts right by announcing its impending closure. Panic measures follow but nothing is done to prevent the same thing happening to other companies. Meanwhile, if a little-known ballet company like Western Theatre Ballet has a financial crisis, that apparently isn't even newsworthy.

This year the point has been that the money spent on public libraries in this country is twelve times as much as the subsidy for all the other arts put together. This is a great consolation—when Covent Garden, which is always threatening to close, once again reverts to a Palais de Danse and every other ballet and opera company in the land has closed down, at least we shall still be able to read books about the productions we can no longer see.

Too nude for Tcherina

THE Paris-Opéra, already in a state of some confusion owing to Lifar's resignation and internal uncertainty, was recently thrown into a state of more confusion when Ludmilla Tcherina walked out less than a fortnight before the much-heralded production of *L'Atlantide* in which she was playing the non-singing principal rôle. She blamed the costume — flesh coloured all-over tights — and a confusion of styles in the production. An S.O.S. was sent to Claude Bessy, then playing that other charmer Helen in Ballet Theatre's *Helen of Troy* at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Bessy hurried home, learnt the rôle in a few days and quickened the pulses of even the most resisting Frenchmen as she descended the staircase — in the offending pink tights and looking altogether "in the altogether".

But what of Tcherina? Well, she has been invited to appear at the Metropolitan Opera herself in, believe it or not, a production of *L'Atlantide*. But whether, for New York, she will don the pink tights she refused to wear in Paris has not yet been revealed.

Irving triumphs in Manhatten

ROBERT IRVING, the popular and much-missed ex-conductor of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, was enormously successful during his first season as musical director of New York City Ballet. On his first appearance he was cheered before a note had been played. Not really surprising as Irving has always been much liked during his seasons with the Royal Ballet in New York, but encouraging nevertheless. However, I don't find it such an unprecedented event as at least one American newspaper seemed to find it, as Yuri Faier, conductor of the Bolshoi Ballet at Covent Garden in 1956, was greeted with cheers on the opening night the moment he stepped into the orchestra pit.

Films during lay-off

EVEN though American Ballet Theatre has closed down for two months, the company as a whole will not remain idle. Lucia Chase, the director, tells me that her company will be making a feature-length film of three typical works in the repertory. This will most certainly include that cowboy epic *Billy the Kid,* a classical *pas de deux* and one of the most popular modern works. Based, no doubt, on the success of the Bolshoi film, the idea is presumably to boost the company's prestige as well as to raise funds. Meanwhile, is nobody doing the same thing here? For years there was talk of filming *The Sleeping Beauty* with Fonteyn. I suppose that by the time somebody decides at long last to do something about it, Fonteyn will have retired many years before.

Why cannot Paul Czinner, who made such a good job of the Bolshoi *Giselle,* make a film of Fonteyn in *Ondine,* in which she has her greatest created rôle to date?

Inglesby returns

AFTER an absence of five years, Mona Inglesby is returning to the stage. As a ballerina she was always better known in the provinces than in London mainly because her International Ballet spent most of its time on tour and built up a faithful audience in many provincial towns. Inglesby now intends to follow the example of Markova and Grey in becoming a 'free-lance ballerina", although unlike them she

does not intend to undertake concert tours but plans to appear only as a guest artist with established companies. Her first appearance will be in the R.A.D. gala at the Coliseum on November 13, when she will dance the Rose Adagio from *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Inglesby has one precious asset denied to any of her rivals — the scores and dance scripts of nearly twenty of Petipa's ballets never yet seen in this country. It remains to be seen whether the combination of Petipa with Minkus or Pugni was on anything like the level of the Petipa-Tchaikovsky collaboration. Probably not, but there must be something in Inglesby's treasure chest (a legacy from the late Nicholas Sergueeff) worth producing.

Beriosova stops off

BREAKING their aerial progress back from the Antipodes, Svetlana Beriosova and Bryan Ashbridge stopped in Bombay to give concert performances in India for the first time, and are, as far as I can remember, the first Royal Ballet artists to appear there. Among the classical excerpts they gave was Fokine's *The Dying Swan,* danced by Beriosova. "It was specially requested," said Beriosova in apology, "otherwise I should never have done it. My own feeling is that it was created specially for Pavlova by Fokine and that nobody since has really had the right to do it."

It is no secret that Beriosova's appearances with the younger part of the Royal Ballet in Sydney tipped the scales of the company's success there. Before her arrival the press had not been too adulatory nor had the public responded in the vast numbers and with the warmth that was hoped for. But Beriosova changed all that and she achieved a following almost equal to that of Fonteyn — what is more, the public who came to see her continued to come and applaud the rest of the dancers and their repertory.

The press have not always been so attentive to detail, because one magazine, running a Roy Round picture of Anne Heaton and Donald MacLeary in *Le Lac des Cygnes,* captioned it — Rowena Jackson and Donald MacLeary in *Coppélia.*

De Valois stops off

DAME NINETTE DE VALOIS waited until she got home from Australia to stop off—and then it was into the Windsor Hospital, where she had to remain for several weeks. A slight accident caused her to slip a disc in her spine and this, added to the other troubles she has had with this region of her anatomy, made it essential for her to rest. As a result she missed all the final rehearsals and the first performances of Ashton's *Ondine.* It was a sorry homecoming for someone who, in her own way, had enjoyed as great a popular success in Australia as a practicing ballerina. I hear that, as usual, she never spared herself in making continual public appearances and doing everything possible to build up the success of her company. By the time these words are read, we all hope that she will have made a complete recovery.

Rambert for America

TED SHAWN, famous American dancer and now director of Jacob's Pillow, paid a flying visit to England. His reason: to make the final plans for Ballet Rambert's visit to Jacob's Pillow next year.

The company will show many of the ballets from today's most important choreographers, never before seen in the States, as well as the famous Rambert *Giselle.* For this latter work young dancers trained by Margaret Craske will augment the production. The company will stay there for three weeks and this may be followed by other dates on the other side of the Atlantic.

Following the "I predict" game now played in the popular press, I predict that if Rambert does one cartwheel on one of those American national network programmes, the traffic around Jacob's Pillow will become completely disorganised in the rush to see her and her company.

Revivals we want to see

WITH the return of Andrée Howard's *La Fête Etrange* to the Royal Ballet's repertory in December, we move a step further towards the integration of the two Royal Ballet companies. Two other works rumoured to be returning to Covent Garden from the old Theatre Ballet's repertory are — Cranko's *Harlequin in April* and MacMillan's *Danses Concertantes.* It would be good if Ashton's *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* and *Les Rendezvous* could also be brought back to the large stage. With the combination of the best of both repertories from the Royal Ballet companies, it seems that we really are getting to see some of Britain's finest choreographic efforts — all under one roof.

Young composer dies

BRITISH ballet can so ill-afford to lose its young creators that the sudden death of Michael Hobson came as a shock to everyone. As musical director of Ballet Workshop, he composed a great many original scores and it was owing to him that the musical standard was so high. He also composed works for several other organisations, notably for Festival Ballet, City Ballet and Western Theatre Ballet. He was a very fine pianist and was latterly connected with the Welsh National Opera Ballet and the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet. His last work, for Ronald Yerrell's *The Uninvited Guest* at the Sunday Ballet Club, had its first performance only a few days before he died. Apart from his musical qualities he was loved by everyone, particularly those with whom he worked.

happy birthday to...

		December
Pixie Bevan	London's Festival Ballet	26
Fernand Nault	American Ballet Theatre	27
Maretta Grace	London's Festival Ballet	28
Christina Katin	London's Festival Ballet	28
Yelle Bettencourt	De Cuevas International Ballet	30
Margaret Dale	Television Producer	30
Beryl Goldwyn	Ballet Rambert	31
		January
Mary Coulson	London's Festival Ballet	1
Peter Clegg	Royal Ballet I	3
Olga Makcheeva	De Cuevas International Ballet	3
Anya Linden	Royal Ballet I	3
Ray Barra	Stuttgart Ballet	3
Génia Melikova	De Cuevas International Ballet	6
Dame Adeline Genée		6
Bronislava Nijinska	Teaching in America	8
Johaar Mosaval	Royal Ballet II	8
Calliope Venieris	De Cuevas International Ballet	10
Kurt Jooss		12
Patti Schmidt	American Ballet Theatre	12
Christine Alderton	Royal Ballet II	13
Jim Clouzer	American Ballet Theatre	13
André Prokovsky	London's Festival Ballet	13
Roland Petit		13
Mary Munro	Ballet Rambert	15
John Kriza	American Ballet Theatre	15
Ivan Dragadze	Ballets 1959	17
Margaret Mercier	Royal Ballet I	17
Nora Kaye	American Ballet Theatre	17
Belinda Wright		18
Elizabeth Carroll	American Ballet Theatre	19
John Benfield	Ballet Rambert	20

Dancer of Today

GERD LARSEN

BORN in Oslo in 1921. Came to London and studied with Margaret Craske and Antony Tudor, making her début with the London Ballet in 1938. Remained with this company after it had merged with the Ballet Rambert until joining International Ballet in 1941. Left in 1942 to join the Royal Ballet, becoming soloist in 1946.

Creations: (for London Ballet) Canzonetta in Soirées Musicales; *Paris Ballerina in* Gala Performance; *(for Royal Ballet) Hera in* Tiresias; *Rôles: (for Royal Ballet) Berthe in* Giselle; *Princess Mother, Leading Swan and Spanish Dance in* Swan Lake; *Fairy of the Crystal Fountain and Florestan's Sister in* The Sleeping Beauty; *Mazurka and Czardas in* Coppélia; *Prélude in* Les Sylphides; *Miller's Wife in* The Three-Cornered Hat; *Tarantella in* La Boutique Fantasque; *Aristocrat in* Mam'zelle Angot; *The Dancer in* The Rake's Progress; *Red Queen in* Checkmate; *Young Girl in* Nocturne; Pas de Deux *and Red Girl in* Les Patineurs; *Therèse in* A Wedding Bouquet; *Fairy Summer in* Cinderella; *Prostitute in* Miracle in the Gorbals; *Choreographer in* Adam Zero.

GERD LARSEN is one of the new generation of mature dancers who are now coming into their own with the Royal Ballet. Her recent performances as Berthe in *Giselle* have shown, with their fine clarity and complete conviction, the value of having only experienced artists in rôles such as these. Brought up primarily in the Tudor tradition of the London Ballet, Larsen has always been an unusually gifted dance actress. Her performances both in *Nocturne,* where she played the rich young girl, and as the lead in *Adam Zero,* were finely drawn characterisations, and it always seemed a pity that her dramatic abilities were only comparatively rarely used. As a classical dancer she has an individual — perhaps Scandinavian — charm of her own, yet her true talent was always towards character. With encouragement she could now become one of our leading mimes.

Books a-Plenty for Christmas

THE SUBJECT AND A FAN: Svetlana Beriosova, subject of A. H. Franks' biography, has a word, a smile and an autograph for one of the many hundreds of youthful fans who surrounded her when she appeared as a guest celebrity at the Hulton's Boys' and Girls' Exhibition at Olympia.

Stars in their Courses

ADELINE GENEE, A Lifetime under Six Reigns, by Ivor Guest (A. & C. Black, 30*s.*).
ANTONIO and Spanish Dancing, by Elsa Brunelleschi (A. & C. Black, 18*s.*).
SVETLANA BERIOSOVA, A Biography, by A. H. Franks (Burke, 25*s.*).

THERE is a feeling of interim report about the biographies of most dancers still living — frequently they are out of date before the ink has time to dry. However with Adeline Genée the case is rather different because at the age of 80 she is unlikely to resume her professional career in the theatre, though, most happily, she is still with us and as active as somebody half that age. I never saw her dance but, as a child, her name meant as much to me as that of Pavlova because on that famous curtain which used to be the glory of the London Coliseum, and upon which all the theatre's great names were portrayed, there she was. "Mummy, who is that lady dressed as a butterfly?" "That, dear, is the great ballerina, Genée." For years I have tried to get someone to tell me more about her and how she danced and once I asked Dame Ninette de Valois. "She was wonderful, one of the finest technicians I ever saw." But still the picture was not very clear. I should have known that Ivor Guest, who has brought so many ballerinas of the past alive, would do the trick.

Not only does he give a very clear account of how she danced but also of the environment in which she danced. It is fascinating to know of her chance meeting with that other great Danish dancer, Lucile Grahn, who was one of the famous four eminent Romantic ballerinas. They met in a shop in Munich and Grahn complimented Genée on not wearing a very short costume, then went on to tell about how she had left Copenhagen because of Bournonville's unwelcome attentions. But in even sharper relief are the famous triumvirate who controlled the ballet at the Empire — Katti Lanner (choreographer), Leopold Wenzel (composer) and Wilhelm (a designer plus). It is a period of broughams, pearls, violets and stage-door Johnnies, and Guest has brought it all affectionately out of the gas-lit shades. I don't imagine that today's ballet public would take too kindly to some of the ballet in which Genée starred, always excepting *Coppélia,* but I am certain that, with their growing awareness of the past and of Danish ballet classics, they would still adore Genée. What she did for the dance stretched thousands of miles beyond the four sides of Leicester Square. She brought the dance to the people and she brought great dignity to the dance and the dancer. By becoming the darling of the public she laid the foundation for the audiences of today, and by becoming the first President of the Royal Academy of Dancing she laid the foundation of the teaching for the dancers of tomorrow. Although we in England will never forget the debt we owe to Genée as a dancer, I am afraid we sometimes overlook her great achievement outside the theatre itself. Ivor Guest's book is a permanent reminder of the fact — should we ever be so stupid as to forget again. Not only does it make enthralling reading but it brings to life a very important phase of British ballet. The illustrations are charming and the quality of the photographs makes me wonder whether we really have advanced at all as regard to ballet photography.

I doubt if full justice can be done to Svetlana Beriosova until some Ivor Guest of tomorrow gets on the job. A. H. Franks oozes sincerity in his biography of her and has an obvious deep admiration for her work, but hers is as yet such an incompleted career that somehow no real person steps out of the pages of the book. I found that the quotations with various critics' assessment of her performance held up the flow of the narrative like the Peasant *pas de deux* in *Giselle.* The book's main interest is in the many photographs from early childhood, through her Metropolitan Ballet days to her creation of La Belle Rose in *The Prince of the Pagodas.* One of the most surprising discoveries was to learn that Svetlana is a "born giggler". A drawing by Juliet Pannet in the early pages rather sums up the book as a whole — an efficient portrait but not really of the subject.

I suppose that much the same could be said of Elsa Brunelleschi's study of Antonio, but here the case is rather different because she intersperses her narrative of the remarkable Sevillian's life with a number of sapient observations on the Spanish dance as a whole — and there are few people in Britain more able to do so. For this reason and for the many lively pictures the book is essential to every Hispanophile's library, but it must be left to some future scribe to capture the volatile personality of the star. Books on the dancers of Spain are so rare that we must be thankful for the few that are written by people who know what they are talking about.

P. W.

Visitors to Russia

RED CURTAIN UP, by Beryl Grey (Secker & Warburg, 30s.).
RUSSIAN BALLET MASTER, The Memoirs of Marius Petipa. Edited by Lillian Moore (A. & C. Black, 21s.).

TWO visitors to Russia and 110 years between their respective arrivals. The French Marius Petipa stayed there 63 years and was responsible for the glory of the Russian classical ballet; Beryl Grey stayed a few weeks and became the first British ballerina to dance with the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow. Both have recorded their first impressions of the theatres in that ballet-loving country.

Any record of a visit is twice as valuable to posterity if it is a first-hand account, and the first part of Grey's book is personal and gossipy but completely honest, and she does not gloss over the few little disappointments. The over-riding impression left by this section is of a friendliness, deep and sincere, from all with whom she came in contact. The second part concerns Grey's impressions of Soviet ballet as a whole, and the great lesson to be learnt from all this is the utter dedication of the Soviet artist. It is here that the dividing line falls between the approach to ballet in Russia and in the West, where dedication is often sneered at and considered to be something more of a joke than anything else. The immensity of the ballet organisations in the various theatres where she played — in Moscow, Kiev, Tiflis and Leningrad — is impressive, so impressive that one is conscious of British ballet being a babe-in-arms by comparison. Obviously it was impossible to absorb a great deal of background in such a short time, and that she has been able to tell us as much as she has is wholly admirable in someone who must have been concentrating on her performances, but it was a pity that she could not have given us more technical details about the teaching and the difference in the productions. It is also a pity that her literary imagery is incapable of making any of the people she met into anything more than lay figures; thus Ulanova, Plisetskaya and others pass through the book like wraiths. But what she has to say has importance as coming from a ballerina and because she records an historic occasion. Some of the photographs, most of which were taken by Grey's husband, Sven Svenson, are beautiful and have certain value for posterity.

Unfortunately what Petipa has to say about ballet in Russia and his own remarkable contribution to its history is very perfunctory, and the fact that he was 86 when he wrote his brief memoirs and was extremely hazy about dates has given the book little other than curiosity value. The latter part of this very brief autobiography descends to a tirade against the director of the Imperial Theatres — Teliakovsky — who, as far as I can remember, caused Diaghilev a bit of trouble also. Nevertheless, Lillian Moore has done the best she can with these scrappy notes by adding a number of biographical notes of her own to each chapter and by adding a very valuable chronology of Petipa's works at the end. This is obviously an essential to every complete ballet library, but one must only regret that those who have made the greatest contribution to the art of ballet are, always excepting Karsavina, the most ill-equipped to write about it. **P. W.**

The Voice from the Orchestra Pit

BALLET MUSIC: An Introduction, by Humphrey Searle (Cassell & Company Ltd., 21*s.*).

THIS book seeks to trace the history and development of ballet music. Unfortunately while music has a history, and ballet has a history, ballet music — as such — clearly has not. Consequently what Humphrey Searle has been virtually forced to do is to write a potted, and rather inaccurate, history of ballet laying stress on the music and composers involved in it.

There are innumerable small errors of fact, and Searle leaps to conclusions on the very flimsiest of evidence. For example, referring to Tudor's *Dark Elegies,* he points out that this "of course contains a part for solo voice, and Tudor tended to enlarge the expressive power of ballet by introducing song, speech, pantomime, and anything else which seemed suitable or necessary". This seems to me to be a most remarkable account of Tudor's career, but no more remarkable than many of the other misleading statements in the book. Searle clearly has only a very scanty knowledge of ballet in the theatre, and his work is not therefore suitable as a book of reference.

The author himself is a distinguished composer, and might have been expected to have explained some of the problems of ballet music from the composer's point of view. Yet this is just what he does not do. At the end of his book he adds a mere four page postscript entitled "What is Ballet Music?" In this he very briefly runs over questions which might well have provided the basis for his whole book. Again, while he discusses quite a few scores, he gives no indication of the relationship between the music and dance.

The whole period of Romantic Ballet is almost disregarded apart from a few remarks about *Giselle.* Important ballet composers like Pugni are barely mentioned, while Schneizthoeffer, composer of the French *La Sylphide,* is also disregarded in the text and when his name appears in a list of important ballets at the end of the book, it is mis-spelt. While composers like these, Minkus, Drigo, etc., may be of only small importance musically, they were key figures in 19th-century ballet. His account of the "Impact of Diaghilev" is quite misleading — has Mr. Searle never heard of Vsevolojsky, does he think Benois was just a designer? — and by following earlier accounts without question he gets things like the date of *Les Sylphides* wrong.

Which brings me back to the immense number of errors the book contains. If it were a better book these would not matter, but even if they could be excused they would still show the sort of cavalier unconcern about the facts of ballet still typical of certain slip-shod music critics. If they were caught out making the same kind of errors regarding opera they would probably never dare show their faces again. **C. B.**

The Twelve-monthly Regulars

THE BALLET ANNUAL 13, edited by Arnold L. Haskell (A. & C. Black, 25*s.*).

MOST annuals are discreet enough merely to include the year of origin in their titles — not so *The Ballet Annual.* This hussy brazenly comes out with its age, so that *The Ballet Annual — No. 13* tactlessly reminds us that although it may *seem* only yesterday that we stared pop-eyed at the first issue, in fact we are all thirteen years older. The new generation of ballet-goers and dancers will not be able to remember a time when there was no *Ballet Annual.* It has become an institution like Santa Claus.

It is hardly necessary to recommend a book that I suppose everyone seriously interested in ballet buys each year as a matter of course. In every way this number is up to the high standard of its predecessors and its foreign coverage is quite possibly the best ever, yet it would be unnatural here and there if every reader did not see different aspects of the publication that might be advantageously changed to suit his personal viewpoint.

To me, for example, it seems that the record of the ballet year, contributed by the Editor, Arnold Haskell, ably assisted by Mary Clarke, is regrettably superficial. The only other carp I have — apart from wondering who Constance Lambert was — is that throughout this edition of the *Annual* I seem to sense the dry rot whiff of "the Establishment". Could we not, with advantage, have a few squibs — a trace of malcontentment, a touch of disenchantment? Is British Ballet really so much the best of all possible worlds?

Yet for all this I would no more give up *The Ballet Annual* than I would give up smoking. I've grown accustomed to its face. **C. B.**

BALLET 8, Photographs by Serge Lido, commentary by Irène Lidova, preface by Marie Rambert (Art et Industrie, distributed in Britain by A. & C. Black, 2 *gns.*).

IT is hard to say anything new about albums of photographs which appear regularly, but somehow this year I think that this

THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS MODELS: Serge Lido, whose album of photographs has reached its eighth year, is seen between George Skibine and Marjorie Tallchief in the picture on the left. They were at the party at the Cournand Bookshop, in Paris, to celebrate the album's publication. Also at this annual party, to which every ballet name in Paris is invited, are Nina Vyroubova and Rosella Hightower, seen in the picture on the right.

is the best collection to date, possibly because, in France at least, so much has happened. There are some magnificent pictures of the Bolshoi Ballet at the Paris Opéra, of Festival Ballet and of Royal Ballet (II). With each issue, Lido introduces some special feature, and this year there are eight pages of designers at work, which is of particular interest because to most people designers are merely a name on the programme. This album also contains my favourite picture of Antonio — in his native Seville against an Andalusian sunset and that wonderful cathedral. There is also a record, pictorially far more worthy than the occasion warranted, of the hybrid entertainment — *Le Rendez-vous Manqué* — which started off 1958 on a curious and zany note. **P. W.**

Beryl Grey

RED CURTAIN UP

"I have read with much interest this stimulating account of the personal reactions and professional impressions of the first Western ballerina to appear with the Soviet Ballet as guest artist. Particularly valuable is the chapter devoted to comparisons of Soviet dancers with Western dancers, and their respective methods of training."—*C. W. Beaumont*
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NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

The Bolshoi *Giselle*

Adam: *Giselle.* Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden (Yuri Fayer). HMV CLP 1210-1. 2 12 in. 71*s.* 8*d.*

NOT the least revealing aspect of the Bolshoi's production of *Giselle* was the integrity, respect and loving care with which Adam's much-maligned score was presented. Many people were surprised to discover how drastic are the cuts made in our own productions of the ballet, in all of which the deletions and prunings are so numerous as to amount to an unforgivable mutilation of Adam's conception, and produce an effect of disjointedness for which the composer has often been held responsible.

One critic suggested when the Bolshoi were here that the Russians had miraculously "improved" the orchestration, whereas in actual fact the Bolshoi were at last allowing us to appreciate the essential rightness and beauty of the original scoring, the delicate colouring and transparent textures of which had for so long been overlaid by the thickening operations of our own "improvers".

Yuri Fayer's performance on these discs was made two years ago during the Bolshoi's visit, and despite the fact that the actual playing leaves something to be desired, the authenticity and understanding of Fayer's direction makes this an essential set for any ballet music collection.

The earlier Fistoulari (Capitol) and Blareau (Decca) versions, each on a single 12 in. disc, have been given a reputation for being "complete", though both are heavily abridged. Balletomanes and those who have made a study of the ballet and its music can afford to smile at the embarrassment of non-specialist reviewers who, confronted with this two-disc *Giselle* containing twice as much music, are now acclaiming it as "absolutely complete".

It does in fact include every bar of the music as played in the Bolshoi production. But that is by no means the same thing as the complete score as Adam wrote it.

It is beyond the scope of this review to outline the complicated history of the changes made in the structure of the ballet since the 1841 première, but — if only for the record — it is worth describing how this Russian *Giselle* differs musically from the original production in which Grisi created the title-rôle.

For a start, because the Bolshoi production is based on Petipa's revised version (last revived under his supervision in 1897), Petipa's modifications are followed. The most drastic of Petipa's changes (though sanctioned by Perrot, who had himself made the same alteration in an earlier revival) was the elimination of the Act 1 *Pas des Vendanges,* with its solos for Giselle and Albrecht. Only the coda from this section was retained, but placed earlier in the act after the waltz. In place of the *Pas des Vendanges,* Petipa introduced a bravura solo for Giselle to music by Minkus, which has none of the delicate, shy quality of the suppressed variation and injects an element of acrobatic display into the work as much out of character with the rest of the ballet as is the Peasant *pas de deux,* though Adam himself interpolated this *divertissement* by Johann Friedrich Burgmüller into his score in the first place.

Petipa is said to have cut the Burgmüller *pas de deux,* though the familiar choreography could well be his, and the fact that the Bolshoi included it makes this an even likelier possibility. The *divertissement* consists of seven numbers — five originally danced by the "peasant" couple, the final *Allegretto* (the waltz published separately as *Souvenir de Ratisbonne,* once the most popular number in the ballet) and *Allegro* danced by them and the *corps de ballet* as well. Except for the concluding *Allegro,* which is nowadays never played, all these movements are heard in the recording; and the man's *Allegro* variation (No. 3) includes a coda omitted from our productions.

As well as these major changes, there are some other, less serious, omissions in Act 1. Forty bars are cut from the *pas de deux* danced by Giselle and Albrecht to the *Pas des Vendanges* coda; only half the *Marche des Vignerons* is played (another Petipa abridgment); and we are denied the full statement of the Willi Theme in Berthe's warning to Giselle that girls who spend all their time dancing will die and turn into willis. A cut of 20 bars is made towards the beginning of the Finale, and a larger one of 46 bars a little further on takes out a section, just before the start of the Mad Scene proper, to which, according to a stage direction in the 1841 Meisonnier piano score, Giselle attempted to seek refuge in Berthe's cottage.

The only addition to Act 2 is Giselle's big bravura variation, based by an unknown composer (in all probability Minkus) on the "he loves me, he loves me not" love theme from Act 1. Incredible though it may seem, this famous dance, one of the highlights of the ballet, is definitely not by Adam, having been interpolated when the ballet was revived, possibly by Saint-Léon, for Adela Grantzova in St. Petersburg in 1864.

The opening scene, in which huntsmen were frightened from the scene by the willis, is omitted, as is generally the case nowadays; and only the brief introduction remains of another scene nowadays suppressed — that immediately after the *Apparition de Giselle* in which peasants who wandered into the forest were made to dance by the willis before fleeing in terror. The *Allegro* section of Albrecht's entrance, in which Wilfred begs him to come away, is also cut.

An omission more to be regretted is the once-famous fugue, greatly admired by Saint-Saëns, to which the willis danced a contrapuntal round. Nor do we hear, towards the end, the distant fanfares which in the original version heralded the approach of Bathilde and her entourage. The final *Allegro,* used in Western productions, is also replaced by the Bolshoi's less melodramatic quieter ending, a modern innovation based on the preceding *Andante.* This effective close reminded me vividly of the wonderful ending of the Bolshoi production in which Albrecht (in Clive Barnes' words) "is not hysterically throwing himself on Giselle's cold grave; instead he is by himself at time's still centre, holding the flowers of his dream".

Fayer's sensitive unfolding of this supremely evocative ballet score is something to cherish, both for itself and as a record of how the music was conducted when Ulanova danced Giselle. Yet, oddly enough, the playing falls well below the standard the Covent Garden Orchestra achieved during the Bolshoi's London season. There is no want of discipline, but the string tone is particularly lacking in lustre and is for the most part thin and scrawny.

The violin solo in Giselle's Act 1 bravura variation sounds perilously unsure, and again in Myrtha's entrance in Act 2, where the effect of unearthly, imperious serenity is seriously impaired. And no wonder that the name of the solo violist was not given on the label, as is usually the case in *Giselle* recordings. His woefully routine account of the *Andante* in the Act 2 *Grand Pas de Deux* should not have been passed. Much of the wind playing, too, is surprisingly feeble.

Can it have been that the sessions took

MAD SCENE: This action photograph by Roger Wood, taken during a Bolshoi performance at Covent Garden, is reproduced in colour on the sleeves of HMV's recording of Giselle. *It shows Galina Ulanova as Giselle, Vladimir Levashev (left) as Hilarion, and Nicolai Fadeyechev (right) as Albrecht.*

place too early in the morning, or did many of the players — greatly over-worked at the time of the Bolshoi season — send deputies? In some of the more dynamic sections, such as the entrance of the hunting party in Act 1 and the *Allegro feroce* in which the willis dispatch Hilarion, the playing has a thrilling sweep and attack, but in the main it sounds dispirited and under-rehearsed. The recording itself is also a little disappointing in its lack of clarity and "presence".

Nevertheless, the records provide a rare opportunity of hearing practically the complete ballet as Adam wrote it, and despite the above reservations, no one who loves *Giselle* can afford to be without the set.

Ballet Music on Stereo

THE first releases of the new stereophonic discs have already made available a generous amount of ballet music, allowing us to hear the orchestra with the broad sweep and spread of sound of a "live" performance in the theatre.

Costing no more than the ordinary LP record, this new kind of disc, with its grooves carrying two sound-tracks in place of the former single channel, needs special reproducing equipment, and will be damaged if played with your present pick-up. A conventional gramophone can be adapted to play them, by adding a stereo pickup or cartridge and a second amplifier and loudspeaker. If you are thinking of buying a new gramophone, however, you will find a wide range of stereo players already on the market, from forty guineas upwards, which will play both kinds of records — the new stereos and your standard "monaural" records as well.

Of the first batch of stereo discs, pride of place must be given to the RPO/Beecham *Scheherazade* (HMV ASD 251), which sounds even more magical than it did on the monaural edition. A new performance by Monteux with the LSO (RCA SB 2003; monaural: RB 16077) has greater spontaneity, but Beecham's caressive phrasing and imaginative care for detail produces a more vibrant and evocative result.

Monteux's account, with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, of *Le Sacre du Printemps* (RCA SB 2005) somehow seems more exciting than it did on monaural. The perspective and definition of the sound is here quite astonishing.

Ansermet's complete *Firebird,* with the Suisse Romande Orchestra (Decca SXL 2017), gains greatly in atmosphere from the addition of the extra channel; though the *Petrushka* by the same forces (Decca SXL 2011) sounds a little hard and steely. On the other hand, Solti's recording of *La Boutique Fantasque* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice,* with the Israel Philharmonic (Decca SXL 2007), has taken on an added warmth in its stereo version, though the spatial pinpointing of instruments is not quite as marked as in the majority of the other stereo records issued so far.

Second-Empire Ballets

Delibes : *La Source* — excerpts. Messager : *Les Deux Pigeons* — Suite. Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden (Charles Mackerras). HMV CLP 1195. 12 in. 35*s.* 10*d.*

DELIBES' music for *La Source* is delightfully pretty and has lost none of its freshness, though its sparkle is rather cold and heartless and does not inspire affection, let alone interest in the ballet's characters and story. Delibes, though admittedly much more gifted than Adolphe Adam, lacked the older composer's instinctive dramatic sense. As Serge Lifar has rightly pointed out, a ballet by Delibes is a suite of dance-tunes all readily interchangeable, whereas *Giselle* is a drama, a story clearly delineated and developed in music.

Mackerras's excerpts from *La Source* give us the greater part of the music for Act 2, in correct sequence, and include the well-known *Scarf Dance,* which was a strange omission from Maag's recent Decca recording of excerpts from Delibes' portion of the score (the rest was by Minkus).

Mackerras's touch is surer than Maag's and the recording quality excellent, though without equalling the glitter of Decca's sound, particularly in its new stereo version (SXL 2044). Choice will largely depend on the respective couplings, though it is difficult to decide between Decca's routine *Sylphides* and HMV's suave account of Messager's fusty, faded *Deux Pigeons* which, in spite of Mackerras's deft persuasion, fail to take wing.

PAS DE DEUX: Markova and Dolin, as Odette and Siegfried, pose on the cover of HMV's new disc of excerpts from Swan Lake, played by the Philharmonia under Efrem Kurtz, with Yehudi Menuhin as the solo violinist. The selection contains several dances not included in Western productions of the ballet.

Tchaikovsky with Menuhin

Tchaikovsky : *Swan Lake* — excerpts. Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden (Jean Morel). RCA RB 16070. 12 in. 39*s.* 11½*d.*

Ballet Theatre Orchestra (Joseph Levine). Capitol P 8416. 12 in. 41*s.* 8½*d.*

Philharmonia Orchestra (Efrem Kurtz), with Yehudi Menuhin (violin). HMV ALP 1644. 12 in. 41*s.* 8½*d.*

THE RCA and Capitol discs offer similar, though not identical, *Swan Lake* selections, each including what most people would regard as the "plums". Morel is guilty of some rhythmic slackness, but his conducting shows a more imaginative response to the music's poetry and depth than is evident in Levine's workmanlike, impersonal treatment. The orchestral playing on both discs is superior to what one usually hears in a theatre performance, yet without being really distinguished.

For the full Tchaikovsky richness and allure it is necessary to turn to the HMV, on which Kurtz's mastery of the idiom is given full play by the tonal sumptuousness and corporate virtuosity of the Philharmonia. The presence of Yehudi Menuhin also takes us back to the days when Leopold Auer played first fiddle to Legnani's Odette-Odile in St. Petersburg, and when Mischa Elman, for an astronomical fee, dashed in the interval of his Albert Hall concert to Covent Garden to accompany Kchessinska and Nijinsky in the second-act *pas de deux.*

Understandably, the selection includes all the sections with violin solo — the Act 1 *pas de deux* ("Black Swan"), played in its full original form; the Siegfried-Odette Act 2 *pas de deux,* complete with its rarely-played fast coda; and the exciting *Danse Russe* from the Supplement, a great rarity. This *Russian Dance,* incidentally, was included by Kurtz, in a different orchestration by Schmid, in his *Homage to Pavlova* record.

Menuhin's playing, while brilliant enough to be sure, is more remarkable for its lyrical sensitivity and subtlety. I suspect that his part in the recording may be the result of coaxing, cajoling and, perhaps, even coaching, by his wife, the former dancer Diana Gould.

Kurtz's enterprising choice of material also takes in the usually omitted *Andante sostenuto* variation in the Act 1 *pas de trois.*

Apart from an occasional touch of pre-echo on the HMV, all three discs are well engineered, though the Capitol has rather less flavour and body than the other two.

Americans in Paris

Offenbach arr. Rosenthal: *Gaîté Parisienne.* Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra (Felix Slatkin). Capitol P 8405. 12 in. 41*s.* 8½*d.*

MORE of Offenbach's champagne sparkle is captured in this Capitol performance than in the Boston Pops' two earlier recordings. Slatkin's shaping of the *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *La Belle Hélène* waltzes does not quite achieve the elegance of Efrem Kurtz's treatment on the old Parlophone 78 set of excerpts (why do not HMV get Kurtz to record the ballet on LP, or better still some unadluterated Offenbach — his enchanting ballet *Le Papillon,* for instance?). However, the Hollywood orchestra's splendid playing makes this easily the best complete *Gaîté* to have appeared, and the reproduction is outstanding in every way.

Edinburgh Aftermath

THE NIGHT AND SILENCE: Paula Hinton and David Poole in Walter Gore's ballet to Bach / Mackerras music. This was generally considered to be the most successful of the twelve new works created for the Edinburgh Festival. Owing to the tragedy of the company disbanding, this and the performance of Bjorn Holmgren's Midsummer Vigil *on television provided the only opportunity for those British, not attending the festival, of seeing these creations.*
Photo: Seymour Grey

FLAMENCO

Given on BBC Television on October 12. Produced by Christian Simpson. Designed by Clifford Hatts.

ANTONIO ROSITA SEGOVIA
PACO RUIZ CARMEN ROJAS
and Antonio's Spanish Ballet Company.

THE dances of Spain, particularly those of the Andalusian gypsies known as "flamenco", lend themselves admirably to television presentation. The fact that, in spite of the small screen, they are brought right into the home gives them the necessary sense of intimacy.

Both the producer and designer had, in this case, successfully attempted to reproduce a typical Andalusian cellar and the dances followed each other in natural succession. Most of what we were shown came from the final section of Antonio's show at the London Coliseum and the undoubted success of this TV presentation, enthusiastically received all over the country, must have been responsible for filling in the rare gaps in the Coliseum's booking plans over the company's six-week season. Antonio himself introduced the programme with charm and explained the meaning of *pitos, palmas* and *zapateado,* and later danced a *Caña* and a delightful *Bulerias* with Carmen Rojas. Possibly the most effective dances of all were Paco Ruiz's *Farucca* and the *Soleares* he danced with Rosita Segovia. Apart from one or two rather vague shots when the camera seemed to have caught the dancers off guard, the camera work was very good.

P. W.

MIDSUMMER'S VIGIL

Given on BBC Television on October 19. Music, Alfven. Costumes, Allan Fridericia. Choreography, Bjorn Holmgren. Produced by Patricia Foy.

PRUDENCE RODNEY
CHRISTOPHER LYALL

HAVING read the reviews of the Edinburgh performances, I watched this excerpt from a sense of duty rather than with any hope of being given an enjoyable or otherwise rewarding experience. But providing that one can overcome the uneasy sensations caused by the maddeningly repetitive theme tune, the actual dancing is perfectly bearable. Admittedly the work is pretty second-rate, but when one considers Holmgren's choice of music nothing first-rate could reasonably be expected.

The choreography is musically arranged, but rather monotonously *allégro,* and it is literally peppered with *ballottés, jetés* and *batterie.* The lifts are certainly undistinguished and conventional; on the other hand poses and movements using the floor are effective.

Glossy as this *pas de deux* is, it presents no particular difficulties — even though it rather reeks of Holmgren and Elsa Marianne von Rosen. The finer shades of characterisation and interpretation are

TELEVISION

definitely not required and it does give scope to classical dancers.

Both Prudence Rodney and Christopher Lyall danced exceedingly well and shrewdly relied on charm as against coyness. They were the most refreshing feature of the performance and it was sensible of the BBC to choose them. Both, and especially Christopher Lyall, have excellent clean classical techniques. If they are typical of the Edinburgh Company, the standard must have been very high indeed.

The cameras, however, seemed underrehearsed, and I can think of no excuse for dancers being allowed to move out of vision when performing on such a small stage. I am sorry too that the BBC so often ends its ballet programmes with the dancers, sweating and breathing heavily, suddenly looming into a very close-up pose on the last note of music.

E. C. M.

THE NIGHT AND SILENCE

Given on BBC Television on October 22. Music, Bach (arranged Mackerras). Harpsichordist, Mauritus Sillem. Costumes, Ronald Wilson. Choreography, Walter Gore. Produced by Francis Essex.

THIS must surely be the ballet for which television has been waiting for years—and what marvellous television it made! Why was it so compelling? Mainly because Gore knows how to present his characters in the round and convey the reality of their concerns, and also because the work contains excellent television situations.

The dancers were in splendid form. Both acted with considerable skill and acted together, and both can even make use of the camera's closest scrutiny. Paula Hinton's dancing was impressive, but since we last saw her her style has undergone some changes. She has always had *ballon* and a remarkable elevation. Now she has become very much softer — there is more freedom in her back and a beautiful softness in her *ports de bras.*

The actual production was on an unusually high level. The lighting was dark (possibly too dark at times) and dramatically effective, while the cameras were manipulated with a rare eye for perceptive detail. From the very first shot — of David Poole, gripping the back of a chair and brooding in sombre close-up, with the camera backing quickly away — we were interested, gripped by the story and actively enjoying it. The ballet is a *pas de deux.* It concerns personal relations — a theme of love warped out of its natural shape by suspicion, jealousy and obstinacy — and the outside world (a *corps de ballet)* is sensibly kept outside.

The action centres round a bouquet, and the Man's shocked realisation of what the

TOUMANOVA RETURNS: Dancing in England for the first time in many years, Tamara Toumanova appeared with Vladimir Ouktomsky on BBC's Music for You *programme in October. In the* Dying Swan, *pictured here, and in the* Don Quixote pas de deux, *her beauty was seen to be untouched by the years.*
Photo: Seymour Grey

bouquet he has unexpectedly found may imply. How cleverly Gore builds up the climaxes and how accurately he conveys the rapidly shifting relationships of his two characters. The movement is indeed so simple and unfussy that other choreographers may well envy the finished economy of his style. For example he vividly suggests the gulf that has suddenly grown between the characters by placing them, he taut and she trembling with emotion, as far apart as possible on a horizontal plane, and looking away from each other.

A French choreographer would probably have turned the idea into a *La Parisienne* ironic comedy stained with amusing traces of bitterness. Gore, through his narrative skill, has made a human drama out of it — a genuine slice of life — with the moments of realism theatrically heightened. We see elements of brutality and violence, the temporary forgiveness, indecision, her plaintive departure and hope-against-hope return, he thrusting her away again, and, more theatrically, ripping up the bouquet, pelting the flowers at her knife-thrower fashion, or hurling the chair, and, later, almost ready to strangle her.

And it was probably the cheapest 20 minutes of ballet that the BBC has ever transmitted. No set to speak of. Only a bouquet, a chair, and, of course, two splendid artists. **E. C. M.**

ANYA LINDEN

Two dances in Chelsea At Nine **on Independent Television on October 21. Producer, Wendy Toye.**

LINDEN certainly lacks the type of excitement and fireworks usually associated with performers in this elaborate programme. However, she looks incredibly fresh and captivating on the small screen. On this occasion she danced Aurora's solo from Act 2 of *The Sleeping Beauty* with an easy grace and confidence.

Her second item was much less satisfactory. Her husband, Igor Tamarin, dressed gipsy-style and cummerbunded as if for Kalman or Ketelbey, played a violin arrangements of Gluck's woodwind solo, the Dance of the Blessed Spirits from *Orfeo*. But for some reason he was uncomfortably perched on a small rostrum in the middle of Mrs. Tamarin's stage, She was therefore obliged to dance her innumerable *arabesques* around and at one anxious moment looked as if she would dislodge him.

Alas and alack, her costume was so short that it wouldn't drape — it looked precisely like a "Baby Doll" nightdress. The lighting was flat and unhelpful, while the décor consisted of one cut-out archway which has already been used as a background. **E. C. M.**

CHAZOT and RENE BON

Scenes from Act One of Giselle **given on Independent Television's** Chelsea At Eight, **on October 28. Producer, Wendy Toye.**

TELEVISION addicts with an eye for something frivolous must be grateful to Granada Television for the Chazot performances and the invigorating shake-up they must have given ballet. But what has this "ballerina" got against *Giselle*? Rather than being a burlesque, her interpretation is almost a parody, and were it not for the fact that she dances so strongly and the correct choreography too, she would be quite unacceptable. Obviously she finds it easier to extend the Russian style into comedy than the Romantic French school.

From her entrance as she peeps out of the cottage, dancing her "I hear someone knocking", leering lecherously for Albrecht (René Bon), the tempo quickens. With the Mad Scene, when she really lets her hair down (she certainly deserved a less shaggy wig!), it has reached the pace of French farce.

Short of using subtleties, she does everything in this potted version — she even clings to the chimney-pot to escape Albrecht's overtures. But her dancing commands respect and the *pointe variations*

TRAVESTIE BALLERINA: René Bon supporting Chazot in the Black Swan pas de deux *which they gave on their first TV appearance in Britain. Recently both artists appeared in excerpts from* Giselle.

were extremely well danced, while her remarkable balances and double turns *en attitude* would have disgraced no ballerina. But Chazot fails to move one or to convey the tragedy of Giselle. When she dies, and with such violence, she looks like nothing so much as a beached whale spread out on the stage. **E. C. M.**

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

ANTONIO'S SPANISH BALLET

The Three-Cornered Hat

I FEEL really sorry for the Spanish choreographer. There is a great national composer — Manuel de Falla; there are national writers like Martinez Sierra creating a book from a story by Alarçon; there is a vast vocabulary of Spanish national and classical steps. All this they have at their disposal, yet it takes a Russian, Leonide Massine, plus a little local help from a gipsy named Félix, to make a great Spanish ballet. Possibly they rather resent this in Spain because they frequently have a go at making new versions of their *El Corregidor y la Molinera*. Pilar Lopez had a try and both her performance and that of Roberto Ximenez, as the Miller and his wife, were so good that the shortcomings of the ballet as a whole could well be overlooked. Now it is Antonio's turn and he does not seem to have got to grips with it at all and it did not make the happiest of openings to his London season at the Coliseum.

The trouble is that the Spanish national background is so strong that these people forget that ballet, to be accepted as such, is a composite art. If there is a story to be told it is no use just stringing together a lot of national dances and then superimposing a few scenes of mime in the hope that it will add up to a choreographic whole — things just don't work out that way. The narrative has to be integrated into the steps and into a stylisation of bodily movement. Of all the choreographers working for Spanish companies it is only the Mexican Luisillo who has really understood this and so far he has not attempted *The Three-Cornered Hat* apart from dancing a solo Farucca.

Within the first few moments of the curtain rising on Antonio's version it was apparent that he had failed to grasp the essentials of true choreography. For instance when Antonio, as the Miller, tries to teach his pet blackbird to tell the time, he resorts to a few conventional "tweetie-pie" gestures which have no theatrical impact at all. In this same scene, Massine, standing there in what is a far too dramatic and unlikely position — both arms raised in stylised jabbing movements like a Matador placing banderillas — makes his point immediately. A few moments later a girl crosses the stage with a pitcher on her shoulder and encourages the Miller's advances. Antonio's girl was a rump-waggling trollop; Massine's girl had tremendous dignity and the whole line of her body and the upraised arm are classical in their seductiveness. Antonio's is more realistic but it is Massine's that we remember. These are possibly small points, but they are indicative of the different approaches of the two creators — one an undoubted master, the other a superb performer of his native art.

A certain coyness has crept into the whole work and this was particularly noticeable in the Miller's Wife of Rosita Segovia, who brought a Bournonville approach to the whole thing without having an ounce of the style with which the Danes perform their native works. Apart from his Farucca, the unquestionable peak of the ballet, Antonio himself did not seem too much at home as the Miller, though he can never fail to bring a personality to everything he does, and the aforementioned solo was magnificently given. The rest of the company, though dancing adequately, remained undetermined and shadowy figures in the background.

The sets and costumes were tasteful and lavish in an operatic sort of way, but I missed most dreadfully the simplicity and stylisation with which Picasso suggested people inhabiting a burning Andalusian plain in the Massine ballet for Diaghilev. I often wonder how it is that people who think they truly understand the art of ballet honestly believe that they have the right to alter works which have, from all the elements, been conceived as a perfect whole. A masterpiece is a masterpiece as it stands, and *The Three-Cornered Hat*, as given by

the Diaghilev ballet, was a masterpiece.

Classical and Regional

The remaining two sections of the programme fell into the more familiar mould of all Spanish dance programmes, and all the various and varied items were old friends — not well-worn ones because they appeared to have been freshened up and redressed all round. The Spanish classical *Pas de Quatre,* inspired by 18th-century composers and 19th-century prints, is charming. All four dancers — Carmen Rojas, Carmen Rollan, Graciella Vazquez and Rosita Segovia — give it with a stylish sense of fun which only Segovia tends to exaggerate in her Seguidillas. The way in which Antonio has arranged these dances is very much to be commended. Then of course we had his Sarasate *Zapateado,* without which no programme is complete, and it is only testy old me who, having seen this hundreds of times, would wish that he could devise some other form of self-display showcase. Naturally he danced it with all his usual flashing power.

This second part of the programme ended with the *Suite of Basque Dances* — neat and precise dancing from all, ladies dancing on the rim of a tumbler and not once knocking it over, much more spectacular presentation than of old. All very well done and very popular with the Coliseum audience. But at this point I began to wonder whether something had happened to me — was I, after all these years, starting to grow away from Spain? Frankly there was little to complain of, but I was left quite unexcited. I think that Antonio, with his years of triumph and experience, has found a formula for popular Spanish dance presentation, a formula designed for the masses rather than those aficionados who love the dance art of Spain in its various aspects.

The moment the third part of the programme opened I realised that I had certainly not grown away from Spain because on the opening of this *La Taberna del Toros,* with its glimpses of gipsy dancers through a bead-curtained archway, all the old magic started to weave its spell. Flamenco numbers follow each other and wave upon wave of dancers seemed to invade the stage. Quite outstanding in the early part of all this was the Farucca of Paco Ruiz. This handsome cousin of Antonio improves with every season. A certain roughness in his style and softness in his *palmas* which used to be noticeable in his work has now been replaced by directness, sureity and a dominant personality. My only regret is that we seem to see him in no other solo because he has danced this same Farucca from many London seasons back. Noticeably absent also was any new number from Carmen Rojas, a splendid flamenco dancer whose appearances were few and rather muted. An interesting new dance was *Zapateado Campero* for eight boys with long staves such as are used for rounding up bulls in Spain.

Antonio himself danced a *Caña,* and although he was good he could never efface the memory of Pilar Lopez in this most ancient of flamenco dances from the Cante Jondo group. It was a pity he did not repeat his *Martinetes* (forging songs), in which he was so excellent in earlier programmes. The evening ended with the typical *Fandangos de Huelva* and *Bulerias* for the stars and the whole company. The whole of this section was very well arranged and effectively designed and restored the excitement we all associate with the Spanish dance. But it was a pity we could not have been shown more novelties such as appeared in Antonio's last splendid season at the Palace Theatre.

P. W.

SOLEARES : Paco Ruiz and Rosita Segovia, of Antonio's Spanish Ballet company, in a number from Taberna del Toros, *which they gave on television. Photo : Seymour Grey.*

HENRYK TOMASZEWSKI'S POLISH MIME THEATRE

AGAIN an enterprising foreign company played to empty houses. But, for this once, I think that some of the blame can be placed on the broad shoulders of their own countrymen; their recent predecessors, the "Ballet from Poland". Anyone seeing this excruciatingly vulgar provincial group, which had the nerve to appear here for a month, would hardly dare risk a visit to the Polish Mime Theatre.

How does this group compare with the other mime companies seen during the past year, the Danish Pantomimteater and Marcel Marceau? Well, the Poles are certainly minus the prettiness, humour and period grace of the first mentioned, but they are also minus the aroma of mothballs and traces of insipidness which the Danes also possess. In comparison with Marceau, they lack his and his company's technical polish and physical control and his precise and evocative use of music.

With this Polish group, however, there is no shortage of imagination, inspiration, originality and courage, and it is on these qualities that they are really impressive.

Some of their movements echo the Ballets Jooss. There are only brief glimpses of these, but so effective were they and so in harmony with their style of acting in the opening moments of the mimodrama, *The Crib,* that one wished that greater use had been made of them. Small emphasis is placed on the actual physical technique of mime. None the less, in the physical sense the artists are always perfectly adequate, even at times exciting.

Six mimodramas were given during the season, and only one, *Passing By,* alleged to be based on Italian mime but a poor imitation of Marceau's *Jardin Public,* was not worth staging.

I suspect that a post-Marceau slightly superior fastidiousness made some shy at the simpler strains of the Polish character. However, a large amount of the company's engrossing appeal derives from its utter unsophistication. The costumes, for example, are crude in colour and coarse and cheap in fabric, and yet they are imaginative and have a rough charm of their own. The scenery is primitive, but perfectly adequate because it always suggests the appropriate background and never obtrudes.

It is a very pure form of mime. Pure in the sense that life has been minutely observed and that the mime itself springs from natural movement which has been made theatrically much larger than life. Little is stylised and much use is made of facial expression. The Poles may be by turns fascinating and irritatingly naïve, yet one is constantly compelled to admire the sincerity of the artists, who appear to feel most genuinely their experiences.

The first mimodrama, *The Crib,* is a Christmas folk story which involves a curious multiplicity of characters — Biblical (Mary, Joseph and Herod, Cain and Abel), allegorical (Death in skeleton-painted tights with scythe), supernatural (werewolves), and symbolic (the elements). Its theme is man's progress from the fall of grace and the everlasting struggle between good and evil. Evil is represented by Lucifer in various guises — first as the Serpent with Adam and Eve, the latter in pink fleshings and Godiva wig. Good is represented by an Innocent Child, mimed by an adult. The Elements help the Child to combat evil, but the evil does not disappear; the argument being that

if good is to exist there must also be evil.

So much of *The Crib's* atmosphere of fantasy is due to inspired effects. A gigantic white sheet, covering the entire stage, is brought on. When rippled it suggests the sea and waves; when stretched flat and taut it becomes ice for the characters to skate on and fall on realistically. The forest is simulated by a male *corps* in brown tights and alpine jackets, each member carrying a branch trimmed with green cellophane leaves in each hand. The trees shift into different patterns enabling characters to lose themselves in different parts of the forest.

And as scenes change, to mask the entrances of fresh characters two boys enter downstage from either side carrying what amount to large screens attached to each arm.

Another ambitious work was *Quasimodo,* based on Hugo's *Nôtre Dame de Paris* and mimed on a bare stage. The men in the *corps* act as a living décor. Dressed in all-over grey tights, they represent Nôtre Dame itself, and by their changing patterns suggest in movement the spiral staircases. Motionless, with arms held upright at an angle and with fingers touching, they become its Gothic arches, or also side chapels, clusters of columns, and even gargoyles. Against this background the four characters mime their agonising melodrama, but without too many melodramatic trimmings — staggers, gropings, breast-clutchings or head-thumpings. But by a curious lapse two of the climaxes are muffed: the violent and premeditated murders of Phoebus and Claude Frollo just happen. It ends, however, with a prodigious display of technique with Quasimodo frantically trying to keep the cathedral's bells ringing.

Irena Szymkiewicz as Esmeralda, traditionally garbed in a scarlet and crimson black-laced costume, barefoot and with hair flying, and tambourine (but without her traditional goat!), gave an intelligent performance.

In Gogol's *Overcoat* such remarkable parallels with the Marceau version could be detected that one wondered if Tomaszewski had seen the French group. The only major differences were that the pathetic little clerk is seen seeing himself in the actual coat and enjoying the power it gives him long before the fatal purchase, and the splendid chase when he is pursued by thieves. This is done at great speed, with none of the characters travelling backwards or forwards more than a few paces.

Another work, *A Book,* comes closest to the revue sketch, and shows the reactions of four totally different personalities to a sentimental novel picked up casually. The eternal triangle, husband, wife and lover, emerge to act the four different interpretations.

One of the company's major flaws is the use made of music, which rarely added anything to the performance. The various short dances in the Christmas tale were too slipshod. Of course, they were intended to be spontaneous and improvised, but they still need not be quite so rough. The older women are very good indeed, but with the exception of Irena Szymkiewicz, the girls were generally unsatisfactory.

Henryk Tomaszewski himself is a master of timing; he has great acting ability and a mobile and expressive fact. Jan Uryga and Jerzy Fornal also made very favourable impressions.

E. C. M.

BALLET CONCERT

WHILE we have all seen ballet cropping up in some pretty unlikely places, the idea of dancers replacing the customary instrumental soloists in an otherwise normal symphony concert is a novelty in England. Apparently the practice is fairly common in America, and has also been tried out on the Continent, but the London Symphony Orchestra's concert at the Albert Hall on October 19 was the first experiment of this kind in London, certainly in recent years.

NERINA IN THE CONCERT HALL: Nadia Nerina in the variation from the Black Swan pas de deux *in* Le Lac des Cygnes *Act 3, which was one of the items she danced with David Blair at a concert in the Royal Albert Hall. Photo: Seymour Grey.*

The honour of being the first ballerina to tiptoe on the hallowed ground hitherto sacred to Messrs. Rubinstein, Menuhin & Co., should have gone to Beryl Grey, but owing to the injury to her partner Oleg Briansky, she had had to decline the invitation. As a result it was Nadia Nerina and David Blair who took their places in front of the conductor's rostrum.

To an extent this kind of entertainment bears a certain resemblance to the type of arena ballet that broke out during the gold rush days of ballet's boom period ten years ago. There was the same absence of theatrical contrivance and atmosphere, the same wayward irregularity of sightline, and the same type of non-specialist audience. On the other hand the Albert Hall is nowhere near so vast as the caverns of the Empress Hall or the Harringay Arena, and as was shown by such events as a Markova-Miskovitch recital and more recently the visit of the Cossack dancers, it is far from being totally unsuitable for dance entertainment.

For this present concert the orchestra were shifted back, as meek as zoo penguins, on to the upper perches of their orchestral platform, leaving free a stage area of reasonable size if of unadorned austerity. Although the presentation was serviceable, it left several problems unresolved if such a style of entertainment is to continue. The extremely concave arrangement of the players could not have made the conductor's task very easy, and this was further greatly complicated by his being placed behind the dancers so that he could only secure co-ordination by means of furtive glances over his shoulder. It was also unfortunate that a few of the players had actually been placed on the stage — fighting a rearguard action as it were — so that some of the more spectacular jumps of the dancers looked as though they might well be rewarded by crashing through a 'cello or violating a violin. In addition the dancers had to cope with the other unnatural hazard of jumping clean off the unprotected stage and falling, as ungainly as a prize-fighter, into the unexpectant laps of the audience below. Apart from this it was ideal!

Sensibly the dancers' share in the programme consisted only of *pas de deux* — *The Nutcracker* and *The Black Swan* — and a solo, *The Dying Swan.* In these conditions, costumed, spotlit, but seen against an alien background of gentlemen sawing, blowing and thumping, to say nothing of the one who was waving, the performance took on an atmosphere that was perhaps more closely related to the classroom than the theatre. Yet it was not uninteresting, and I feel that any newcomer to ballet coming across it in such circumstances would almost certainly be entertained and even intrigued.

Nerina — no stranger to ballet's missionary activities — produced some tip-top dancing. In fact, I have rarely, if ever, seen her in better form at Covent Garden. Her technique was as crisp as a biscuit, and everything she did had the finish of a perfectionist. Her only faltering came — not as appropriately as it sounds — *in The Dying Swan,* but even this, if no interpretative masterpiece, had the sense to eschew soggy sentiment, and like the rest was beautifully danced.

David Blair partnered well and danced with considerable aplomb, yet his *batterie* was weaker than usual, and he was not getting off the ground as easily as he might. He seems to have gained a little weight during the past year, and this may be at

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the root of his failure to develop further his admittedly brilliant technique, and also for a certain lack of bite in his dancing. Norman del Mar conducted his way between the Scylla of the orchestra and the Charybdis of the dancers with urbane skill.

The audience gave every evidence of enjoying themselves hugely, and the concert struck me as being important in showing how the best of ballet dancers — not to be confused with ballet itself — might be transported to places where people get all too few opportunities to see the dance stars of the world. Such concerts could also provide a not altogether despicable opportunity for Londoners to become better acquainted with overseas stars. While this is far from being an ideal manner in which to meet a ballerina, I think one must be very high-handed and highbrowed not to admit that it is better than never meeting her at all.

C. B.

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

AFTER its long summer recess the Opéra re-opened with a new problem on its hands. Unrelated to each other, the successive departures of Ludmilla Tcherina and Serge Lifar made much ink flow in the press, and once again the public was made aware of the internal affairs of this famous institution.

It was thus in an atmosphere for once devoid of official publicity that the brutal separation between the Opéra and the choreographer who had served it so well for almost 30 years (since 1929) became known. In fact, Administrator Hirsch abruptly decided to accept the resignation which Lifar had handed him last March as a protest because he had not been informed over the dismissal of the *corps de ballet.*

For a long time there had existed a growing disparity between the title and the powers the *maître de ballet* should have and his actual duties. He was no longer consulted over casting, appointments and promotions, engagements, dismissals and repertoire, or even the choice of new works, although he would eventually have to assume responsibility for their production.

It is thus after much judicious contemplation that Serge Lifar has left the Opéra, to the glory of which he was so passionately devoted, and which had in turn also rejected its most spectacular ballerinas, Chauviré and Vyroubova. Far more than a temporary or individual problem, it is a serious crisis which threatens France's first company once again. Reforms must be made and personal interests sacrificed to artistic integrity.

L'ATLANTIDE

ON the eve of the much publicised *L'Atlantide,* Ludmilla Tcherina decided to give up her rôle because of an artistic disagreement. This resulted in Claude Bessy being hastily recalled from the Metropolitan Opera with only ten days in which to learn the rôle.

This opera by Henri Tomasi, based on Pierre Benoit's well-known novel, was given on October 10 at the Opéra after having already been staged at Enghien, Mulhouse and Vichy. Without going into details, it must first be said that the overall effect of the work was lessened by the rather thin music which is certainly well below the standard of the best works of the pleasant composer of *Santons.* The too numerous concessions to the Orientalism of the bazaar were emphasised only too vividly by the magnificent orchestra conducted by Louis Fourestier.

Furthermore the subject, delicate to handle in itself, is undoubtedly not helped by the excessively realistic style of production, nor by the crude décor. The choreography could therefore hardly have compensated for this air of banality and general lack of poetry and mystery.

On first viewing the visual effect of this mixture of song and dance seems a mistake. The only successful example was Diaghilev's solution for *Le Coq d'Or*—the dancers on stage, the singers in the wings.

With skill and a beautiful mastery, Claude Bessy (partnered by Skibine) adapted her talents and lissom grace to the rôle of Antinéa. Nevertheless the observer comes away with the impression that the part hardly suits her. Her charm is too healthy and clear, and she misses the diabolic perversity.

Without doubt Tcherina, or despite her faults Ethery Pagava, could have brought the Queen of the Desert to life more successfully. Neither, however, would have quite succeeded under existing conditions. Scantily clad in tights the colour of burnt toast, some spangled gauze veils and a tinsel necklace, Antinéa seems to have come direct from some Oriental cabaret. The daring stage games, within the scope of Skibine's skilful and classical choreography, go dangerously near making her appear a common dancing girl. L'Atlantide, must she lower herself to such depths in order to seduce? Let us overlook the alcohol with which she fills the cardboard cups or the way in which with both hands she helps Saint-Avit murder Morhange.

Doubly hidden by obscure gauze curtains and clouds of red smoke, the ballet of Djinns which Lifar choreographed seemed more interesting musically. His movements for the Slaves, in which hand movements and primitive poses are stylised, are also ingenious.

AFTER a long absence Jean-Paul Andréani has returned to the Opéra. His very personal quality of *ballon* has not suffered in any way by this interruption. In addition to him in Balanchine's *Palais de Cristal* one must also praise the austere Madeleine Lafon, partnered by Youly Algaroff, Liane Daydé, although she has lost some of her lyricism, Josette Amiel, and especially Claire Motte, who is always poetic and unassuming.

MARCEL MARCEAU

AFTER two years' absence Marcel Marceau has returned, but this time to the Théâtre de l'Ambigu, which has been rediscovered by him. Once the home of the fairy-pantomime and the bloodcurdling melodramas of the *boulevard du Crime,* Marceau has brought back to it laughter and tears. Having attained perfection and more maturity, his art has been stripped of every superfluous ingredient. With an extreme economy of means and with complete ease he stylises, suggests, or re-creates a world that is by turn cruel, funny or tender. Thus he shows himself to be a worthy heir to Debureau or Chaplin : he has renewed an art which is almost forsaken nowadays.

While the *pantomimes de style* and the Bip pantomimes are certainly already classics, delicate and touching ones, his art has been developed still further in *L'Illusion d'optique, Le Jardin public, Le Saltimbanque* and *La Soirée Mondaine.* In *Adolescence, Maturity, Old Age, Death,* he spontaneously reaches human tragedy, but he can portray with exactness touches of comedy in the misadventures of Bip, either in the Metro or else in preparing to commit suicide. In *La Lettre* and the *Marionnettiste,* his disciple Gilles Segal indicated that he has made great progress and strengthened his very original temperament.

Two mimodramas bring together the full company, and especially Pierre Verry and Sabine Lods, with Marceau. *Les Matadors* is devoted to bullfighting and is notable for the careful attention paid to detail. Some scenes, cleverly linked, express the rivalry of an ageing matador and his young pupil for the love of the same girl. While the older man's career is waning, that of the young pupil never ceases to flourish. The dramatic tension is perfectly sustained: each subtlety is beautifully expressed in mime.

Le Petit Cirque once again exploits the story of rivalry between a small troupe and a big commercial enterprise. Here poetry and fantasy reign supreme, and few will forget the departure of the poor performers on their rough journey in their caravans, rich only in hope.

The musicians, Sébastian Marotto and Jean Prodromidès, must also be associated with Marceau's triumph, while the designer Jacques Noël must be applauded, not just for his inspiration but for his rare ability to work in harmony with the production.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

(continued from page 17)

as he is, he has a great future ahead. (During American Ballet Theatre's hiatus, Fernandez has joined the Nora Kovach-Istvan Rabovsky touring group.) Scott Douglas similarly has made major advances and is now an especially noteworthy classical dancer. Important, too, has been the rise of soloist Ray Barra both as a dancer and as an actor. Of the regular company, it was certainly Erik Bruhn's season and he established beyond a doubt that he is the major *danseur noble* in the Western world. So, too, did Nora Kaye maintain her position of the greatest dramatic dancer in the field though, in future, one hopes she will not attempt *Giselle* again.

One of the major disappointments of the season was the poor showing made by John Kriza in both the classic and dramatic fields as well as in the contemporary works. John Martin reported in *The New York Times* that "As a classic dancer he is surpassed technically by virtually every boy in the ensemble." Likewise shocking and disappointing was the hammy and melodramatic *Giselle* of Alicia Alonso with the usually magnificent Igor Youskevitch performing almost as broadly and superficially.

Performances to be remembered : Ray Barra's drunken peasant rôle in *Miss Julie*

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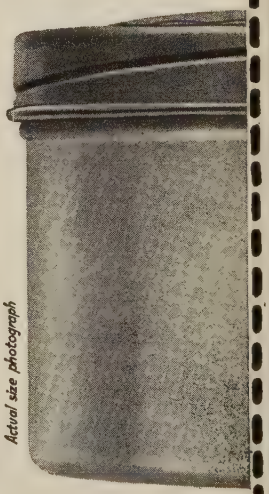

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. . . The ravishingly beautiful Claude Bessy in *Helen of Troy,* which was perfect type casting if I ever saw it. . . . Violette Verdy in her first performance as Grisi in *Pas de Quatre.* . . . Lucia Chase as the tired trollop in *Judgment of Paris.* . . . Nora Kaye in both *Pillar of Fire* and *Lilac Garden.* . . . Royes Fernandez in *Theme and Variations.* . . . Sallie Wilson as Kristine, the cook, in *Miss Julie.*

What did become increasingly evident during the season was the gradual blurring that has occurred over the years of the essential texture of such works as Jerome Robbins' *Fancy Free* and *Interplay*; George Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*; Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden* and *Pillar of Fire,* and Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid.* Since these works are among the mainstays and masterworks of American Ballet Theatre's great and broad repertoire, it now seems high time that the original choreographers were invited back to brush-up and polish these works to their previous performing perfection.

American Ballet Theatre's season at the Metropolitan, despite some of its low spots, was infinitely exciting and, for the most part, rewarding. Certainly no other company in America has so broad a repertory, balanced as it is between the classics and the contemporary works, nor does any other domestic company have the advantage of working with so varied a group of choreographers, artists, designers and composers. At present, American Ballet Theatre is having a temporary lay-off to allow its dancers a much-deserved rest. Meanwhile, the management is planning a fund-raising drive as well as setting up plans for a permanent home base that will save the company from touring under such exhaustive schedules. All of those that believe in the broad and basic policies of American Ballet Theatre await this newest phase in its nineteen-year history chiefly because it is unthinkable to foresee a future for ballet in America without the continuance and resurgence of American Ballet Theatre.

PERCIVAL BORDE, the discovery of Pearl Primus, whose first season with his dance company in New York was such a success. *Photo : Gerry Low.*

HUROK PRESENTS . . .

IMPRESARIO Sol Hurok inaugurated one of his most ambitious seasons of dance with the presentation of the Regimental Band of the Grenadier Guards and the massed pipers and Highland dancers of the Scots Guards at Madison Square Garden before they left on a tour that will take them to some fifty-five cities in Canada and the United States. Both groups perform with such meticulous precision that one might say that, in a sense, their formations in marching were completely choreographic. And, from a dance point of view, the strathspeys, reels and sword dances performed by the Scots Guards pipers and dancers were the highspots of the programme and were notable for their virility, great style and discipline.

Hurok also came up with another winner when he presented Roberto Iglesias and his Ballet Espanol for a week's engagement at the Broadway Theatre prior to their cross-country tour. Just a bit more than twelve months ago, Roberto Iglesias and his company astounded New York with a single performance that took place at Carnegie Hall. Now, he has returned an even more polished and brilliant a dancer. Outstanding in this rich programmes were the *Soledad Montoya,* danced by Iglesias and Rosario Galan, and *Punta y Tacon,* performed superbly also by Iglesias and Ana Mercedes. So great was the success of this season that he is being brought back to New York for a return engagement after the present tour is concluded.

ROBERTO IGLESIAS, whose season in New York with his company was so successful that he had to make a return visit after his tour.

PERCIVAL BORDE

PERCIVAL BORDE, discovered by American dancer Pearl Primus a few years ago and since her sometime partner, has formed a small but wonderful new ethnic dance company that has already completed four weeks of an exciting off-Broadway engagement. The success of this season is all the more remarkable when one remembers that it started while three major ballet companies were playing in competition to each other. However, Borde is a remarkable dancer, strong, handsome, lithe and blessed with a wonderfully rhythmic and dramatic sense. Apparently he can dance anything — from the stirring *Impinyuza,* a Watusi tribal dance, to *Ibo,* an Aztec legend. Guest artist Pearl Primus appeared in two numbers on

GOLDILOCKS: *Pat Stanley and David Nillo, centre, in the "Town House Maxixe" ballet from the new musical in which Agnes de Mille has been responsible for the choreography.*

the programme and has never been seen to better advantage as a dancer. This is an exciting little company indeed, what with its singers, drummers and other dancers, and has provided a welcome change of dance diet in New York.

DANCES BY DE MILLE

AGNES DE MILLE was responsible for the delightful dances in *Goldilocks,* the lavish new musical dealing with the 1910-1915 era of silent films that is now playing at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York. Walter Kerr, dramatic critic of *The New York Herald-Tribune,* and his wife, Jean Kerr, author of the witty current best-selling book, *Please Don't Eat the Daisies,* were responsible for the book of this musical, which proves to be its downfall. It so happens that Walter Kerr previously wrote a book of theatre essays entitled "How Not to Write a Play" and, after viewing this musical, it appears that Kerr followed his own advice, for this musical, which might have been a glorious spoof on an amusing period, completely misses fire. To be truthful, Agnes de Mille's choreography is the only thing that catches the sense and spirit of the period. This is even more understandable when one recalls that her father was William de Mille and that her uncle is Cecil B. de Mille.

Pat Stanley, a young dancer in a secondary rôle, actually is the star of the show and she dances off with its chief honours. One delightful ballet, "The Pussy Foot," features Stanley with Kelly Brown as a Tom Cat, Ilona Murai as a Brunette cat and Lynne Broadbent as a Blonde cat, and the whole work is full of feline graces. The Huckleberry Island Ballet is reminiscent of one of the pirate battles in an old Douglas Fairbanks motion picture and the Town House Maxixe is a very stylish group dance in the manner and spirit of Vernon and Irene Castle. However, the best ballet in the production is "Lady in Waiting", which finds the delightful Pat Stanley imagining herself pursued by a brace of handsome officers à la Ouida or Eleanor Glynn. It must be added that Kelly Brown also danced superbly in a distinguished dance ensemble that included Ilona Murai, David Nillo, Patricia Birsh and Loren Hightower.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

VIOLETTE VERDY, the French ballerina, most recently guest with American Ballet Theatre, has been signed by the New York City Ballet as a regular member of the company for their season which commences on November 25. Swedish choreographer Birgit Cullberg has been invited to produce one or two ballets for this company and other works promised for this season include four works by George Balanchine: *Chandelier, Seven Deadly Sins* and two untitled works, one to a score by Anton Webern, the other to two minuets by Puccini. Also, there will be William Christensen's ballet to the score of Stravinsky's *Octet* and Lew Christensen's *Balletino* to Vivaldi's music.

BALLET AT THE MET.

CONSIDERABLE interest is centred on the ballet plans now under way at the Metropolitan Opera House because it now appears that this will be the most exciting season, at least from a dance point of view, since Rudolf Bing became manager of the company. Since Zachary Solov is not returning as choreographer this season, the management has engaged an impressive group of choreographers, each to work on a particular opera. Alexandra Danilova is to stage "The Dance of the Hours" for *La Gioconda,* Matt Mattox, a jazz dancer, will choreograph *Aida,* Yurek Lazowski will devise the dances for *Boris Godounov,* and John Butler will stage the dances for *Fledermaus.* Lupe Serrano and Scott Douglas, of American Ballet Theatre, have been engaged as principal dancers and, in addition, Jacques d'Amboise, of the New York City Ballet, will be guest dancer in *Fledermaus.* An all-ballet programme may be presented in March and it is rumoured that Antony Tudor, John Butler, Herbert Ross and Frederick Ashton may be invited to provide new ballets for this occasion.

IN BRIEF

ERIK BRUHN and Nora Kaye danced their interpretation of *The Last Time I Saw Paris* on Ed Sullivan's television programme before Bruhn departed, on October 25, to rejoin the Royal Danish Ballet.

ONNA WHITE, choreographer of *The Music Man,* is performing a similar rôle for *Whoop-Up,* due in New York in December.

ANGNA ENTERS, noted dance-mime, has been engaged for her first acting rôle to appear in the stage production of *Rashomon.*

DANCE books published in America this month include Walter Terry's *Gala Performance* and Irene Castle's *Castles in the Air.*

Arthur Todd.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET I
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

November
17 *Agon, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
21 *Agon, Giselle* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
22 **(M)** *Noctambules, Giselle* (Nerina, Somes)
24 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes).
28 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
29 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)

December
3 *Mam'zelle Angot, Rinaldo and Armida, The Firebird*
4 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina)
6 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
9 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
11 *Les Patineurs, La Fête Etrange* (revival), *Mam'zelle Angot*
13 **(M)** *Mam'zelle Angot, La Fête Etrange, The Firebird*
13 (E) *Mam'zelle Angot, La Fête Etrange, The Firebird*
15 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
17 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
20 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
23 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
26 *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
27 (M) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
27 (E) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
29 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
31 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)

January
1 *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
3 *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
7 *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
8 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)
10 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Blair)
10 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
15 *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
17 **(M)** *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
17 **(E)** *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

November
17 The Alhambra Theatre, Bradford
24 The Palace Theatre, Manchester.

January
12 Odeon Theatre, Southend
19 Gaumont Theatre, Ipswich
26 The de Montfort Hall, Leicester

February
9 The Hippodrome, Brighton

BALLET RAMBERT

November
10 The Prince of Wales, Cardiff.
17 The Hippodrome, Golder's Green.
24 The Streatham Theatre, Streatham Hill.

December
8 The Theatre Royal, Nottingham

January
5 Wilmslow Theatre, Wilmslow
12 The Theatre Royal, York
19 Scottish Tour (4 weeks)

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November 28, 29, 30

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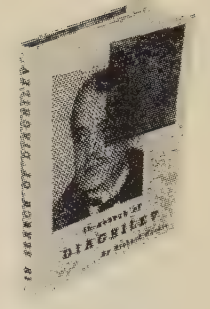

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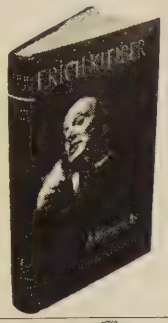

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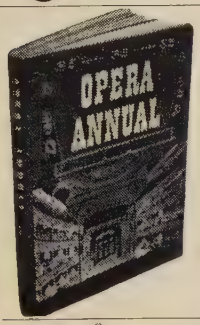

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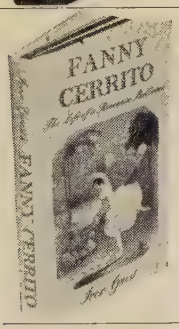

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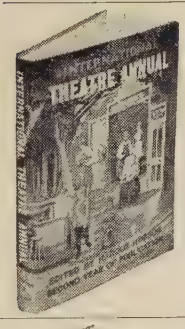

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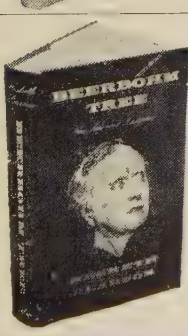

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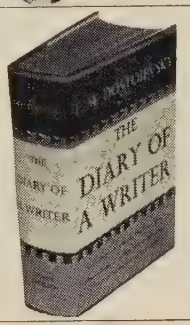

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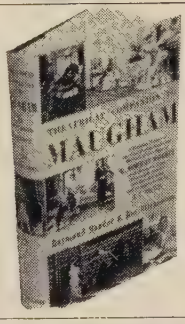

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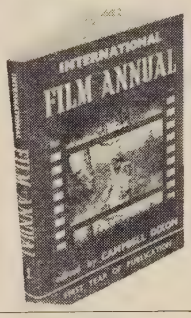

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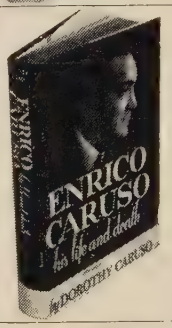

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